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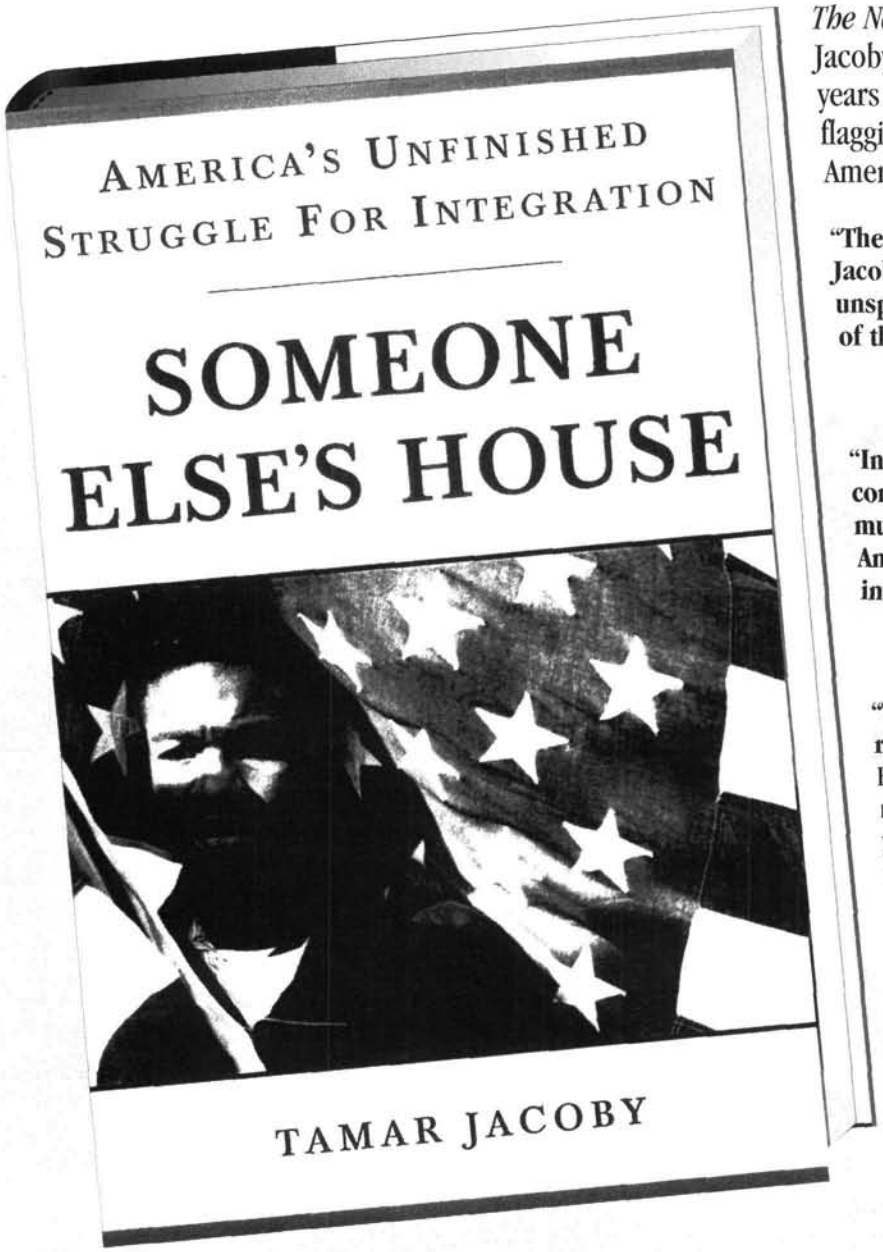

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

AUGUST 17 & 24, 1998

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CORRESPONDENCE

Brill's content

To the editors:

I was deeply disappointed with your fallacious accusation that I was either involved in, or a defender of, "private sector entrapment" ("A Question of Content," July 6).

Putting aside both the issue of Steven Brill's accuracy—which, as you note, I dispute—and the fact that there's no such thing as private sector entrapment (Do banks "entrap" bank robbers?), nowhere has it been demonstrated that Lucianne Goldberg (my mother) or Linda Tripp tried to "entrap" the president. In fact, Tripp was endeavoring to protect herself from being coerced into committing a felony. There was no coordination between Tripp and Ken Starr prior to her agreement to wear a wire in late January. The cooperation between Tripp and the Jones attorneys was in a civil, not criminal, case and occurred unbeknownst to Starr.

Why is it entrapment to notify the relevant attorneys of material evidence in a sexual harassment suit against the highest law enforcement officer in the land? Did Anita Hill "entrap" Clarence Thomas by notifying Senate investigators?

What is most hypocritical is your overnight conversion to the doctrine of jury nullification. You write, "[J]urors are properly reluctant to convict defendants who they believe have been deliberately gulled into incriminating themselves. (That's how the government blew its case against Marion Barry.)"

First, Barry was entrapped by the feds, not by the private sector. Second, when the jurors in the Barry trial exhibited their "proper" reasoning, Michael Kinsley lambasted the entire criminal justice system, especially jurors: "[W]hat does it say about a legal system when a person videotaped using crack can't be convicted for it?" (TNR, September 3, 1990). Your editorials of May 7, 1990, "Barry's Free Ride," and February 12, 1990, "The Barry Bust," were even more indignant. More importantly, unlike Barry, the president knew he was in a legal proceeding when he incriminated himself.

This scandal is an embarrassment for everybody. But the fault lies with the president, not with Linda Tripp, Ken Starr, or my mother. It's a shame that your normally clear-headed magazine has contributed to the fog obscuring this simple fact.

JONAH GOLDBERG
Washington, D.C.

Balkan justice, I

To the editors:

In "Almost Justice" (July 6), David Rieff demonizes the Serbs, damns Western leaders and the United Nations for failing early on to turn Bosnia over to the Muslims, and damns Richard Holbrooke with faint praise for his work at Dayton. But Rieff does not mention the key problem at the outset of Yugoslavia's disintegration that condemned all of its peoples to so much bloodshed. That was the refusal of the West to recognize the fact that the Serbs also had rights and grievances. Western Europe's leaders did initially recognize this when the European Community (E.C., now the European Union), three days after the June 1991 Slovene and Croat secessions, declared that neither unilateral acts nor threats of the use of force could be the basis for a peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis. And, in September, the E.C. established a conference on Yugoslavia, headed by Lord Carrington, with two conditions: (1) None of the republics could be recognized unless there was an overall settlement acceptable to all six republics, and (2) no changes in boundaries could be made except by peaceful means.

The critical question remains: Why did the E.C. go back on its stand and recognize Slovenia and Croatia, and subsequently Bosnia-Herzegovina, in violation of those conditions? And there is also the question of why the E.C. and the United States violated their solemn commitments under the Helsinki Accords and the Montevideo Convention on the recognition of new states.

It is easy to blame Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic and Bosnia's Serbs, when all they wanted was that the right of self-determination be recognized for the Serbs as it was for the secessionists. It was the refusal of the Western leaders to be evenhanded that condemned nearly three million Serbs who had lived in one state for 70 years to now live in foreign ones. Is it difficult to see why they fought to prevent this?

Rieff criticizes Holbrooke for relying so much on Milosevic at Dayton. In my opinion, Milosevic should not have been at Dayton. We bombed the Bosnian Serbs, blaming them for a Sarajevo massacre that they did not commit, as a way of bringing them to the negotiating table (where they had been all along), and then prevented them from negotiating. Instead, we insisted that Milosevic do it for them, just as we forced the Bosnian Croats to have Croatia's Tudjman negotiate for them.

ALEX N. DRAGNICH
Professor Emeritus
Vanderbilt University
Bowie, Maryland

Balkan justice, II

To the editors:

Charles Lane's assertion that war in Kosovo is "very different" from that in Bosnia is wrong ("Trouble Spot," July 6). Slobodan Milosevic is again directing the bloodshed. Lane's contention that Kosovars invited war smacks of the moral equivalence employed by apologists for Milosevic's actions in Bosnia. While Lane gives Milosevic the benefit of the doubt, the razed villages, shelled mosques, and refugee flows speak to renewed "ethnic cleansing." Furthermore, Lane's attribution of "ingrained traditions of blood vengeance" to Kosovars parrots one excuse used by the West to deny help to Bosniaks formerly under Milosevic's sword.

ERIC A. WITTE
Research Analyst
The Balkan Institute
Washington, D.C.

China's wealth

To the editors:

Jacob Heilbrunn misstates the size of the Chinese economy ("Beijing Bull," July 6). If China's economy were truly $4 trillion, and the second largest in the world, it would have a per capita income approaching $4,000 and (I betray my biases here) would be well along the road toward a more liberal authoritarianism. In fact, Japan's economy, despite its woes, remains the second largest in the world. China's economy would have to grow tenfold to reach those lofty heights.

MERRILL GOOZNER
Via the Internet

Jacob Heilbrunn replies:

The World Bank measures GDP in two different ways. The first is merely a sum of the value of all goods and services produced by a particular country. According to that index—as Goozner correctly points out—China's economy would not be the world's second largest. (It would actually be the seventh largest.)

The second measurement—the one I used in my article—takes into account the local purchasing power of a given

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country's currency. And, using that measure, China's GDP was just over $4 trillion in 1996, second only to the United States, whose GDP (measured by purchasing-power parity) was about $7.4 trillion. Japan, measured this way, has the world's third-largest economy. I should have made this distinction clear in my article.

Vouched against

To the editors:

Defending the Wisconsin Supreme Court's ruling in favor of school vouchers, Eugene Volokh cites the provision under the voucher plan allowing parents to remove their children from religious activities ("Vouched For," July 6). But that feature is rendered almost meaningless by the common practice of sectarian schools permeating the curriculum with denominational teachings and slants.

EDD DOERR
Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty
Silver Spring, Maryland

To the editors:

Eugene Volokh argues that taxpayer-funded vouchers for religious education are no different from a municipal fire department putting out a fire that happens to be at a church. Surely, though, there is a difference between that example and state funding of the religious indoctrination of children. Would Volokh argue that it would be constitutional for the state to fund religious worship if it funded all sects and denominations impartially? Would it be permissible if the state sent a voucher to each citizen to be put in the collection plate of the church of his or her choice?

MICHAEL E. BUCKNER
Atlanta, Georgia

Good service

To the editors:

We plead guilty to at least one aspect of Dana Milbank's critique of discussions in Washington about the future of Social Security ("Small Talk," June 8). We did fail to respond promptly to his query received through our toll-free telephone number. That was clearly an unusual breakdown of our established procedures, and we have apologized directly to Milbank.

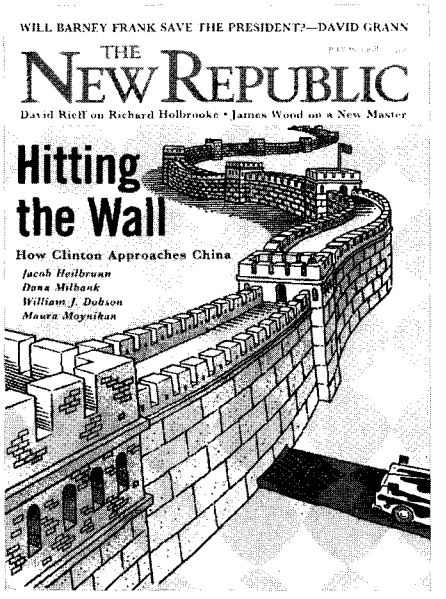
Milbank's article focuses on the inside-the-Beltway give-and-take about options for reforming Social Security. Our reason for being is to help inform Americans about Social Security and to hold forums around the nation to engage citizens in focused discussions of values and options for change so that the decisions to be made by policymakers about Social Security better reflect the public will. Our forums and surveys, we believe, have been quite successful, and we will continue both to educate and to take the public pulse.

CAROLYN J. LUKENSMEYER
Executive Director
Americans Discuss Social Security
Washington, D.C.

Rational numbers

To the editors:

In the June 15 issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC, Adrian Wooldridge claims that I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"welcomed the idea of scrapping the SAT" in his article titled "A True Test."

I would like to make clear to your readers that I have *never* opposed using the SAT in helping to determine who should be admitted to the University of California. I have, however, stated that, if the faculty of the University of California felt that the SAT was not an accurate determinant of academic ability or was biased toward any segment of the population, I would consider voting to scrap its use. To date, the faculty at the University of California has not made such a claim.

WARD CONNERLY
Chairman
American Civil Rights Institute
Sacramento, California

To the editors:

A correction is in order for one of the statistics employed by Adrian Wooldridge. To bolster an argument that there is a "huge gap" between SAT scores for whites and blacks, he states that "only one black student scored 750 or above on the mathematics portion of the SAT for every 89 whites." But this is meaningless. He gives the numerator but not the denominator: How many blacks take the SAT compared to whites? Without this number, no measure can be established for the gap.

TIMUR FRIEDMAN
Northampton, Massachusetts

Adrian Wooldridge replies:

Timur Friedman is right that we need to know the ratio of black test-takers to white to make full sense of the figure. The relevant data is set out on page 399 of Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom's *America in Black and White*. In 1995, 674,343 whites took the SAT compared with 103,872 blacks. This gives a ratio of roughly 6.5 white test-takers for every one black, suggesting that whites are proportionately about 14 times more likely than blacks to be in the top-scoring category for mathematics. I think we can both agree that this is startling enough to constitute a huge gap.

Ask Vint

To the editors:

Could you explain the meaning of the symbol [drawn by Vint Lawrence] that appeared in the center of page 11 in The Hard Questions article of the May 25 issue? It looks like a Chinese ideograph.

WRIGHT J. MORGAN
Via the Internet

Vint Lawrence replies:

The symbols that accompany The Hard Questions articles of TNR derive, for the most part, from historical images signifying intellectual pursuits (the tree of knowledge from Babylonia, the owl of wisdom from Greece, and the scroll of scholarship from China).

The exception is the symbol in question. This is, in fact, the signet of Michelangelo Buonarroti, the Italian painter, sculptor, architect, and poet who, in his day, asked and answered a fair number of Hard Questions. I consider him a good patron of this section.

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (letters may also be sent electronically to: submissions@tnr.com). All letters, sent electronically or otherwise, should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Double trouble

I'm still feeling a lump in my throat as I think about the somber Capitol Rotunda memorial service for the two police officers shot by a deranged gunman last week. The men's sacrifice humbled the powerful politicians who normally strut across the capital stage, stirring them to words that were anything but the standard political pomposities. Al Gore's praise for the fallen "watchmen" drew hauntingly on the metaphors of the New Testament. On behalf of the Congress that the officers had protected, Trent Lott and Newt Gingrich framed appropriate words of palpable gratitude.

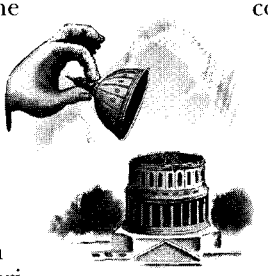
And President Clinton's message managed simultaneously to console the officers' families and to express the feelings of the national family. To me, it was the most moving presidential eulogy since Ronald Reagan's speech in the wake of the 1986 Challenger disaster. "[I]n doing their duty," Clinton said, "they saved lives; they consecrated this house of freedom. They remind us that what makes our democracy strong is not only what Congress may enact or a president may achieve. Even more, it is the countless individual citizens who live our ideals out every day, the innumerable acts of heroism that go unnoticed, and, especially, it is the quiet courage and uncommon bravery of Americans like J.J. Chestnut and John Gibson."

Yet one gets a rather different feeling—in the pit of the stomach—when one reads the following presidential words from Bill Clinton's deposition in the Paula Jones lawsuit.

> Clinton: Did you ever talk with Monica Lewinsky about the possibility that she might be asked to testify in this case?
>
> James A. Fisher [Paula Jones's lawyer]: Bruce Lindsey, I think Bruce Lindsey told me that she was, I think maybe that's the first person told me she was. I want to be as accurate as I can.
>
> Robert S. Bennett [Clinton's lawyer]: Keep your voice up, Mr. President.
>
> Clinton: OK. But he may not have. I don't have a specific memory, but I talked with him about the case on more than one occasion, so he might have said that.

Can it be that the man who uttered such large truths under the Capitol dome also mouthed such petty weasel words in his lawyer's office on Pennsylvania Avenue? The country has been living with Bill Clinton's contradictions for almost six years now, accepting the coexistence of The Good Father and Slick Willie. But, now that both Clinton and Monica Lewinsky are poised to tell their stories under oath to Kenneth Starr's grand jury, something may have to give.

Bill Clinton's maddeningly bifurcated identity is, of course, a function of his own individual psychology—a persona that the press has dissected more relentlessly than that of any other national leader since the brooding Richard Nixon. Yet its relevance is magnified by the double constitutional role the Founders designed for the president. In the context of late-eighteenth-century Western politics, the office was a novelty. Neither monarch nor prime minister, the American president was to be both nothing less than the head of the whole state and nothing more than the citizen-magistrate of one coequal branch in a limited federal government. There was another tension inherent in the office: the president was expected to act disinterestedly on behalf of the national interest while engaging in democratic politicking to get elected and to enact his agenda.



The Founders devised the presidency with George Washington in mind, since he seemed both uniquely equipped to lead and uniquely uninterested in self-aggrandizement. Few presidents since Washington have possessed similar personal qualities, and, as both democratic participation and the powers of the presidency have grown over the centuries, the tensions inherent in the office have become more apparent, too.

Which brings us to Bill Clinton. Some of the attributes that enable him to survive and thrive as a democratic politician—his wit, his eloquence, his deep reservoir of empathy—enhance his stature as the symbolic representative of the American people. They are what make him the man capable of touching all of our hearts as he did at the Rotunda. Others, however—his flexibility bordering on cynicism about matters of policy principle, his excessive need to ingratiate, his seeming lack of self-discipline—do not. They explain the guy squirming under oath in a D.C. legal suite.

Washington was not the saint his contemporaries imagined him to be. But it didn't matter much because he was president at a time when mass media were weak and reticence about discussing the private lives of public figures was strong. In such a milieu, the myths surrounding national leaders could be more durable. This continued to be true right through the presidencies of FDR and JFK—men whose myriad private peccadilloes were hushed up and never allowed to diminish their public stature or that of the office. For better or worse, Bill Clinton is president in an era of instantaneous full disclosure, a time when it is becoming impossible for him, or any other president, to function with maximal efficacy unless his personal qualities—public and private—are widely seen as commensurate with all aspects, symbolic and operational, of his constitutional role.

I still don't know exactly what Monica Lewinsky's testimony will be—and I still don't know if it's going to prove truthful. (Already Linda Tripp is calling Lewinsky a liar for saying that Tripp advised her to write the notorious "talking points" about shading testimony.) But assuming that she truthfully testifies to an affair with the president, the public will be forced to wrestle with the fact that the titular head of our national family is the sort of person who would have sex with a 21-year-old subordinate and then lie about it under oath—albeit it to protect himself from a spurious lawsuit. Forget whether Bill Clinton's presidency can survive that. What will happen to the presidency itself?

To be sure, Ken Starr forced the president, and the country, into this corner. The costs—financial, political, and constitutional—of his investigation are, in many ways, disproportionate to the probable benefits. But Starr is not going away. At this point, the person in the best position to extricate us all from this mess is Bill Clinton himself. I don't know precisely how he could or should do it. He might just go on national television and tell his story, then issue pardons for everyone involved and challenge Congress to impeach him and prove a charge of lies about sex if it wants—or dares. "If anyone is to be held accountable," he could say, "let it be me." But whatever the president does, it should be forthright, and it should be swift. It should show the same bravery in service to democracy for which he so eloquently praised J.J. Chestnut and John Gibson.

CHARLES LANE

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 17 & 24, 1998

SHIELDS UP

The No Dong, the Shahab, the Prithi, the Ghauri: The words do not exactly trip off the American tongue. These are not anthropological terms; they are military terms. They are the names, respectively, for the long-range ballistic missiles of North Korea, Iran, India, and Pakistan. For decades, strategists of the nuclear age warned that there would come a time when the peace of the world would be threatened not by the possibility of a "central nuclear exchange" between superpowers but by the possibility of nuclear exchanges between regional powers. Well, that time has finally arrived. Armageddon has been decentralized. Nuclear virility is no longer a satisfaction of the few. And it will not do to dismiss the new nuclear nations as "rogue states." From the strategic standpoint, this is becoming a world of rogue states.

If anyone doubted that there is a new strategic norm in international affairs, owing to the accelerated proliferation of fissile material and the advanced missile technology that can be used to deliver it, the report of the Rumsfeld Commission should put such doubts to rest. A panel of bipartisan experts has concluded that the American intelligence community is operating with perfectly Panglossian assessments of the "warning times" for the development of various missile arsenals, especially in Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. "A new strategic environment now gives emerging ballistic missile powers the capacity, through a combination of domestic development and foreign assistance, to acquire the means to strike the U.S. within about five years after a decision to acquire such a capability," the report concluded. And so there is a welcome new sense of urgency in Washington.

Except that the new debate about the threat is quickly turning into the old debate about the threat. This is because the discussion has reverted to the matter of ballistic missile defense, which has been the single most incendiary strategic subject of the last two decades. Newt Gingrich and the Republicans in Congress have welcomed the Rumsfeld Report as a new warrant for the Strategic Defense Initiative. Liberals inside and outside Congress have deplored the Rumsfeld Report for the support that it provides for Star Wars. They prefer arms control, and export control, and the religion of deterrence. No sooner did everything change, in other words, than everyone began talking as if nothing had changed. The one side still believes that we can defend ourselves from space. The other side still believes that we cannot defend ourselves from anywhere.

If we are indeed in "a new strategic environment," then surely it is because a quantitative change in the capabilities of many arsenals and many states represents a qualitative change. The new ballistic world is not merely the old ballistic world multiplied. As for the religion of deterrence: Who would like to bet the peace of the world and the lives of hundreds of thousands of people on the rationality of Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il? So far, their behavior has not seemed overly influenced by the theories of Thomas Schelling. The point is not that deterrence will not work. The point is that deterrence may not work. And there are now many more places, and inflamed places, where it may fail.

Given the realities of proliferation, in other words, it is simply outrageous to persist in the old orthodoxy about ballistic missile defense. No, not Star Wars: the eschatological expectation of perfect security as a consequence of a space-based shield was a cruel illusion when Ronald Reagan peddled it, and it is a cruel illusion when Newt Gingrich peddles it. By resurrecting the inanities of the 1980s, indeed, the Republicans are behaving irresponsibly and ideologically. For it is important, now more than ever, that ballistic missile defense be considered soberly. Are there ground-based defenses that may save many lives and interfere with the calculations of an aggressor sufficiently to effect those calculations?

Obviously, defenses can themselves be interfered with. The interest in ballistic missile defense is once again being castigated with reminders of "countermeasures"; and rightly. It is not hard to blind or to confuse or to deflect such defenses. But it is hard to defeat them entirely, and so the question of their moral and military urgency remains. There is also the rather dismal performance of missile interceptions in tests and in the Gulf war. Should this record count as a reason to retire the interest in defenses? The answer to that question is technological. Systems that defy the laws of physics will not work. But technology is not developed by itself. Its development is a political decision, based on an evaluation of the military situation. The failure of some tests and some technologies is not the failure of all tests and all technologies.

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So, then, are there land-based systems that belong in the security posture of the United States, as one of its many elements of defense and deterrence? In a madly proliferating world, the question must be asked. But the question will not be asked if it is considered illegitimate. And so we insist, against the fantasies of the Republicans and the dogmas of the Democrats, upon the legitimacy of the question. •

RUSTY GOT HIS GUN

As gun control opponents are only too glad to point out, gun control laws would probably not have prevented last week's shootings at the U.S. Capitol, which left two police officers dead and one tourist wounded. After all, there are already laws against bringing guns into the District of Columbia, not to mention bringing firearms onto the Capitol grounds. It would have been illegal in most states for Rusty Weston, the man charged in the shootings, to have been carrying a gun in the first place, since he had once been committed to a mental institution. "How much more illegal can something be?" asked National Rifle Association spokesman Bill Powers. "Laws did not help here."

And it's true: Weston's ease in getting his hands on a gun would be comical if it weren't so tragic—and chilling. According to law-enforcement officials, Weston, a paranoid schizophrenic, simply went into his parents' bedroom, reached underneath a heating pad by their bed, and filched his father's .38-caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. Had Weston been unable to find his father's handgun, one assumes that he could have just taken the same shotgun he had used the day before the Capitol shootings to kill 14 of his parents' cats. Indeed, the most taxing part of Weston's alleged shooting spree appears to have been the long drive from Valmeyer, Illinois, to Washington, D.C.

But the mere fact that no existing gun control law would have prevented the Capitol shootings does not mean that we should give up on gun control, as the NRA would have us do. In fact, the Capitol shootings—not to mention the slew of recent school shootings—are actually an argument for taking an even stronger approach: stiffening our gun control laws to the point where guns are actually taken out of circulation.

What these episodes demonstrate is that there are so many guns in the United States that even people for whom the Second Amendment was never intended—unstable children, ex-mental patients—have no trouble getting and bearing arms. The high U.S. murder rate—which, at 7.4 per 100,000 people, is more than double that of Finland, the next most murderous of the industrial countries—is directly attributable to this phenomenon. The presence of guns in our society can make the commonplace deadly.

The United States does not have much more crime than other industrialized nations. Auto theft is higher in France, and burglary is a bigger problem in England—according to a recent article by Fox Butterfield of *The New York Times*. But these countries do not have as many guns as we do in the United States, so these crimes are far less likely to turn deadly. By contrast, in America, if a homeowner stumbles on someone stealing his car or burglarizing his home, it's quite possible the crook will have, and use, a gun. Moreover, the presence of guns does not only make criminals more dangerous. It can also make routine human interactions deadly, turning a barroom brawl or a simple family squabble into a fatal confrontation.

Two years ago, the Secret Service talked to Rusty Weston after he had called his local sheriff and complained that President Clinton had ordered a Navy Seal to kill him. At the time, the agents concluded that he was merely a "low-level threat." If Rusty Weston hadn't found it so easy to get his hands on a gun, that might have been right. But, in a country that has as many guns floating around as the United States does, any "low-level threat" can turn deadly. •

NOTEBOOK

MIXED SIGNALS:

Good economy encourages optimism

—*The Sentinel*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, June 30.

Long expansion makes some nervous

—Same paper, same day.

(Thanks to Brian J. Glenn, Middletown, Connecticut.)

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

CORNERED

By Dana Milbank

I was meeting with a top Clinton aide in the West Wing, as it happens, when Bimbroglio erupted anew on Monday afternoon. The news was just coming in on CNN (that's how White House advisers, shut out by Clinton's lawyers, get their scandal news these days), and so I was afforded a glimpse of spin central before Clinton's defenders had rehearsed their lines. We had been talking about such matters as Clinton's subpoena from Starr when an assistant poked his head in to say that Clinton friend Bruce Lindsey had

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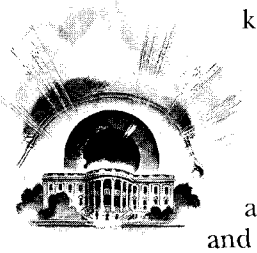
lost his claim of lawyer-client privilege, an unexpected setback for the White House. The aide, his guard down, seemed stunned, incredulously demanding more information—but he quickly recovered. "I'm not worried about any of this," he said reassuringly. An hour later, as I was leaving, the assistant delivered yet more bad news: "Have you heard? Monica's talking to the prosecutors." The aide, in a remarkable display of discipline, retained his studied calm this time.

The same could not be said for CNN's Wolf Blitzer. Outside, next to the White House driveway, he was already standing on a box in front of the camera, bathed in lights, having as much fun as he's had since the Gulf war. "The cue will be 'and all this on a day when the president remains under subpoena,'" he was saying to his cameraman. His excitement is to be expected after a wild couple of weeks for scandal-watchers. First the courts ordered the Secret Service to testify against the president. Then Mike McCurry, the president's best defender, said he will step down as press secretary. Over the weekend, word leaked that Clinton had been subpoenaed. By Monday, Lindsey had lost his case, and Lewinsky was chatting it up with Starr's lawyers.



The president, for his part, was blissfully ignorant of Monday's bad news. He was attending yet another Social Security wonkathon, this one in Albuquerque. He got the news right after the event but, as usual, wasn't talking about it. The result was one of the more entertaining press conferences of the Clinton years, in which Barry Toiv, a deputy press secretary, was offered up as an afternoon snack for the White House press corps:

Q: There have been many opportunities for us to ask questions in the last two days with the president, and he tends to completely ignore us. Is that the official White House strategy?...

Toiv: Sometimes the president answers questions; sometimes he doesn't....

Q: Who notified the president?

Toiv: I don't know. (Peppered with more questions about the scandal, Toiv continued.) I'm sorry. I've got one answer to all those questions, and I've already given it.

Q: What else do you know?

Toiv: I know a lot.

Q: Do you have that same answer to Monica Lewinsky supposedly meeting with prosecutors today?

Toiv: I don't have any answer to that.

Q: Do you feel like you're in a state of siege, Barry?

Toiv: No, I'm waiting for more questions.

Q: Has the president spoken to Bruce Lindsey today?

Toiv: I don't know the answer to that.

As the circling of the pack around the hapless Toiv indicates, the Washington press corps is going through another fit of scandalmania. By Tuesday, when Lewinsky struck her immunity deal, the media industrial complex was overheating. After weeks of forlornly sitting in lawn chairs on Connecticut Avenue, the small stakeout crew outside Lewinsky's lawyers' offices had mushroomed to hundreds of gawkers and a maze of cameras, wires, microphones, satellite dishes, and antennas. A few blocks down the street, the White House lawn had come to resemble a beach party, with each network sprouting an umbrella to protect its correspondent from the sun. Inside the overcrowded briefing room, a White House aide gave the "two-minute warning" before the briefing, and Sam Donaldson, who had just insisted to another reporter that "I am not licking my chops," grabbed his jacket and leapt into position. "Let the games begin," he bellowed. Walking back up Connecticut Avenue after the briefing, I was in time to see a certain familiar, plump, dark-haired young woman in sunglasses in the back of a 4x4 being pursued by a pack of photographers.

Since January, the press has done all it can to keep the scandal in the news, and the country has responded with a yawn. But this time (and, notably, for the first time) the president's political advisers are worried this isn't the usual disconnect between the media and America. The public may not care much about the sex and lies, but people are also sick and tired of the protracted saga and may now turn their anger on the president—rather than Starr—for dragging it out. "What troubles me is we're about at critical mass where his historic legacy is forever tainted, and that's a tragedy for him and for the Democratic Party," one of Clinton's previously most stalwart cheerleaders confided on Tuesday. "There's a danger here if he resists the subpoena and doesn't get the thing behind him people will blame him—not for having sex with Monica Lewinsky but for making this a protracted process."

The legal case itself, ominous as it sounds, is not Clinton's real problem. The president, it is safe to predict, will escape the latest developments as he has all the others. Even now, the possibility of impeachment proceedings seems a bit outlandish. On the matter of Clinton's subpoena, there's no chance that Clinton is going to change his earlier testimony. Clinton's supporters believe the demand for testimony is proof that Starr wants to ensnare the president in a "perjury trap," which itself would suggest Starr has abandoned a more substantive line of prosecution, such as obstruction of justice. And this could be good news for Clinton: Rather than catch the president in real wrongdoing, it appears Starr is trying to trap the president saying the room was beige when it really was white.

Don't count on Lindsey's testimony doing much damage, either. According to one Clinton defender who is in a position to know, the most significant part of Lindsey's testimony—the infamous "talking points" that Lewinsky gave to Linda Tripp, coaching her on what to tell the Paula Jones lawyers—wasn't covered by the attorney-client privilege. Lindsey, this person says, already had told the grand jury he knows nothing about the talking points. Press reports that Lewinsky will claim authorship appear to back this up. Clinton aides fret that the Lindsey decision could obliterate protections, not just for

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White House counsel Charles Ruff and future counsels, but also for Clinton private lawyer David Kendall, because he conferred with them. For now, though, those fears are only theoretical. As a legal matter, even the looming Lewinsky testimony doesn't change much in the case. We already know what she has to say. "It was always going to be a 'he says, she says' endgame," says one Clinton defender.

But, as a political matter, the Clinton subpoena and Lewinsky's immunity deal are far more worrisome. First, they herald the end of the Starr probe, which means that he may be able to deliver a report to Congress in September—and that the House Judiciary Committee may be able to hold a damaging hearing or two to get the news out before the November election. Also, Starr, by raising the stakes with a subpoena for personal testimony from the president—something even Archibald Cox, Leon Jaworski, and Lawrence Walsh didn't do—has shifted the charge of delay from himself to the White House. Says Lanny Davis, a former White House scandal-spinner: "It's in his interest to get this story over with, and it's certainly the overwhelming sentiment of the American people not to protract the investigation any further."

As recently as last week, White House aides saw polling indicating the public didn't think the president was stonewalling. But resisting a subpoena could change that. The political advisers, often at odds with the legal team, had a particularly tense meeting with the attorneys last Friday. One participant recalls a political aide haranguing the lawyers, saying, "I hope to hell you know what you're doing, because there are some serious political problems here." The legal advisers, Kendall, Ruff, Lindsey, and Cheryl Mills, have shut off even senior White House officials. "They don't give us the time of day," grouses one. The four are said to favor fighting the subpoena, but virtually everyone opposes them, with the first lady believed to be wavering. But, while nobody knows for sure what the four lawyers plan to do, others in the White House expect the result will be a compromise, probably Clinton offering videotaped testimony with Kendall at his side. Clinton lawyers hope to delay it until September, after the president's Martha's Vineyard vacation and Russia trip, but Starr almost certainly won't consent to that, and Clinton can't afford to deal with contempt-of-court headlines.

I think the president's best bet would be to forgo the videotape and invite the whole grand jury over to the White House for his testimony. It wouldn't be unprecedented: When Clinton gave a deposition in the McDougal case, he gave lawyers for both sides a tour of the map room. At one point, when Starr deputy Hickman Ewing had his back turned to Clinton, the president put his arm around his nemesis, spun him around, and insisted on showing him the room. So, too, could Clinton entertain the grand jury. He could seat them in cushy chairs in the residence and encourage them to ask questions, turning the whole thing into a town-hall meeting. By the time Clinton was done working his magic, the grand jury would be inclined to indict Starr. •

Inside Starr's chamber.

NOT SO GRAND

By Robert Dreyfuss

When Harry Thomason, the Los Angeles producer and friend of the Clintons, arrived on July 17, 1996, to testify before one of Ken Starr's grand juries, some of the jurors were doing what's become customary for them: dozing. Then the blow-up came. Thomason grew angry when the prosecutor repeatedly referred to him as coming from "Hollywood"; to Thomason, it sounded like he was sneering when he said it. The prosecutor snapped that he would conduct the questioning as he saw fit. Thomason objected again—and suddenly prosecutor and witness were eyeball to eyeball, shouting at each other over a small table. The prosecutor then ran down the hall in search of Thomason's lawyer, Robert Bennett, loudly threatening to charge Thomason with contempt, according to a source with firsthand knowledge of the incident. "Go ahead, talk to him, you little tattletale!" Thomason yelled after the prosecutor. That got the jurors awake.

If the whole episode sounds a little farcical, well, that's because the whole grand jury process in Ken Starr's investigation has become a little farcical. The grand jury that heard Thomason's testimony has since expired. But the one that Starr has convened in its place—and before which President Clinton has been subpoenaed to testify—appears no more serious. Ensconced in a nondescript chamber, the 23 randomly chosen jurors watch and listen to hours upon hours of testimony, all centered on Starr's inquiry into Whitewater and the sex scandal. They sit in rows of chairs, some to the front of the witness and some to the left. And they will continue to sit there until their 18-month term is up or until Starr issues his report. But that doesn't mean they'll be paying attention—or that they have been thus far.

"That grand jury is a joke," one witness, a businessman, told me after his testimony. "When I appeared, no one even listened. Some of them were dozing off, and the others were all talking to each other, drinking their coffee and eating muffins, reading. Some were knitting." Bob Weiner, spokesman for the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, had a similar impression. He was subpoenaed by Starr after suggesting to local Maryland Democrats that the state ought to consider whether Linda Tripp's act of taping her phone calls with Monica Lewinsky violated state law. (Starr apparently believed that the White House had prompted Weiner to do this, which Weiner denies.) According to Weiner, the jurors "looked like they were

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dozing off. Some were looking around the room or at the floor. They were paying very little attention." Furthermore, under the rules, not all members of the grand jury need attend every session, and some don't.

Do such stories mean the independent counsel could lose control of the jurors and that they will ultimately balk at indicting anyone? The jurors are not sequestered; they can follow the case on TV like everyone else. And, unlike the thousands of other federal cases that proceed smoothly through docile grand juries, Starr's case involves the president of the United States. The jury, chosen randomly from the District of Columbia population, is mostly female, middle-age or older, working class or lower-middle class, and heavily African American—a pretty pro-Clinton demographic distribution. In an interview aired on MSNBC, Nicole Maffeo, a former White House intern who fleetingly knew Monica Lewinsky, said that when she told jurors that she objected to being called, since all she knew was gossip and rumor, the jurors laughed and applauded her.

Nonetheless, even this grand jury will probably do just what the prosecutors want. Nominally charged with deciding whether or not to issue indictments against alleged wrongdoers, grand juries are notoriously lacking in real deliberative independence. As the saying goes, a grand jury would indict a ham sandwich if that's what the prosecutor wanted.

Certainly, this wasn't what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they included grand juries in the Bill of Rights. They hoped to interpose a jury of ordinary citizens between those who might be accused of crimes and their official accusers. But modern rules governing grand jury testimony have turned the institution into an all-powerful tool of prosecutors.

Unlike a defendant in a criminal case or a witness at a civil deposition, a witness before a grand jury does not have the right to be accompanied by a lawyer. No judge is present, either; prosecutors thus may ask inappropriate questions with impunity—say, for example, questions that trample on a witness's right to avoid self-incrimination. To be sure, a subpoenaed witness can preempt that problem by moving to quash the subpoena or by invoking the Fifth Amendment. But most witnesses who do appear do not know whether they have to answer any particular question or not. And, if a witness does stumble into a self-incriminating statement, his words can be used against him in court. While a witness has the right to leave the proceedings to consult with counsel, who is usually hovering outside the room, prosecutors can discourage this. Also, too many exercises of this right can persuade the jury that a witness has something to hide. And nothing can prevent the prosecutor from making statements calculated to influence the grand jury or asking redundant, personal, or abusive questions that would not be permitted at a trial. Grand juries don't even have to hear all the evidence in person. Indeed, in July, Starr utilized a completely separate grand jury to hear testimony of some witnesses, meaning that the regular jury will have to rely on transcripts and Starr's summary of that testimony when eventually deliberating on the case.

With no judge to enforce evidence rules, a prosecutor can also blithely present evidence that would be inadmissible in trial. Prosecutors can call whomever they want to testify—they need not demonstrate the anticipated testimony's relevance—as Starr's lengthy subpoena list demonstrates. No judge instructs the grand jury on the law, and there is no requirement that the prosecutor do so; usually, the prosecutor does not. Another problem is that a prosecutor may repeatedly summon a witness to appear; Starr, for example, has called Betty Currie, the president's secretary, five times. To fix this problem, Alan Morrison of Public Citizen suggests a policy of "three subpoenas and you're out." "If you can't get the information you want the first time or the second time, that's enough!" he says.

In the 1960s, opposition to the grand jury system was confined to political radicals and criminal defense lawyers; since then, according to the American Bar Association, it has spread to corporations, such as General Motors and Braniff Airways, which suddenly found themselves targeted by grand juries. The ABA itself has a list of 32 reform proposals that would restore the grand jury's protective function and curb abuse by prosecutors. Twenty-seven states have abolished them altogether.

But reform at the federal level, where grand juries are required, has languished. This is thanks mostly to tough-on-crime members of Congress and all-out opposition from the Department of Justice, which defends the grand jury as a critical mechanism that allows the government to compel important but recalcitrant witnesses to testify and to unravel complex financial fraud and conspiracy cases. Furthermore, they say, since procedures governing criminal trials are somewhat pro-defense, it's only fair to tilt the indictment system toward prosecutors.

The last attempt at reform took place in July, when Senator Dale Bumpers of Arkansas tried to persuade the Senate to allow witnesses to be accompanied by lawyers when called before a federal grand jury; the measure lost 59 to 41. Bumpers has also proposed directing federal district courts to instruct grand jurors on the law and requiring prosecutors to disclose substantial evidence that indicates the target of a grand jury inquiry is not guilty, among other changes.

That measure is stalled, but the political winds may be shifting—thanks, ironically, to Ken Starr. His conduct has led to calls for an end to the independent counsel statute; it may also lend credence to the cause of grand jury reform. Says Morrison: "This is the best chance for something happening because you now have people who've been harassed by the grand jury who actually are thoughtful people who have access to people in power and to the media." In other words, maybe Starr should have thought twice before he messed with the likes of Harry Thomason.

ROBERT DREYFUSS is an independent journalist based in Alexandria, Virginia.

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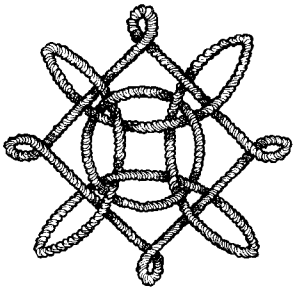
THE HARD QUESTIONS

COLOR-BLINDED

By Glenn C. Loury

A basic principle of liberalism, the "nondiscrimination principle," holds that personal characteristics like race, sex, or ethnicity should have no moral relevance. People are to be valued as individuals, not as representatives of groups. In the economic theory of social choice, this idea is captured by the concept of "anonymity": the legitimacy of any given government benefit depends upon the fact that it is distributed without regard to the social identities of those who get the benefit and those who do not.

Ordinary people, of course, are not so fastidious. They do care, sometimes passionately, about the social identities of those who are helped or harmed by their government's policies. And, if, as Tip O'Neill said, all politics is local, then no politics can truly be anonymous. Government must be responsive to a public that is often motivated by group loyalties and antagonisms. But it must not distribute benefits or burdens to citizens based on traits that are morally irrelevant, such as race.



For multiracial, multiethnic America, this poses a permanent, intractable dilemma. How can we manage it? Some say that all government policies should be "color-blind." And, given our troubled racial history, the simplicity and clarity of this color-blind formulation can, indeed, seem compelling. But I nevertheless find it deeply inadequate. It fails to account for the distinction between procedural and substantive fairness. By focusing intensely on how government treats citizens in discrete encounters, advocates of color-blindness give too little weight to the purposes government is trying to achieve when it acts.

Plainly, procedural fairness is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the attainment of substantive justice in a racially divided democracy. Public policy can be color-blind yet unfairly contrary to the interests of a racial minority—"benign neglect" being the most obvious example. Conversely, policies that are intended to have wide beneficial impact, regardless of race, may require that cognizance be taken of the reality of racial identity. This occurs, for example, when a president, to enhance the legitimacy of his government among the nation as a whole, tries to ensure that his top appointments are, to some degree, racially representative.

The distinction between procedure and substance, means and ends, is of little interest to the color-blind purist, however. In fact, these days you often hear conservatives spuriously likening the defenders of affirmative action to the southern segregationists. "Forty years ago, many Americans felt anger and disgust toward segregationists such as Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus who earned their place in history as leaders of the massive resistance to desegregation," Todd Gaziano wrote in the May-June 1998 issue of *Policy Review*, published by the Heritage Foundation. "Today's massive resistance to racial equality is led by another former governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton."

Of course, any governmental effort to encourage the employment of racial minorities, even one that doesn't involve outright "quotas," could be construed as leading to reverse discrimination—if one is determined to construe it that way. That's what happened last April, in *Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* v. *FCC*. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit voided a federal requirement that radio and television stations engage in recruitment and outreach efforts—but not quotas—to seek minority job applicants. Judge Laurence Silberman, writing for a three-judge panel, declared: "We do not think it matters whether a government hiring program imposes hard quotas, soft quotas, or goals. Any one of these techniques induces an employer to hire with an eye toward meeting the numerical target. As such, they can and surely will result in individuals being granted a preference because of their race."

Now consider the speech last May by Defense Secretary William S. Cohen to ROTC cadets at predominantly black Norfolk State University. He flatly declared that the military takes race into account in the training and selection of officers. "[W]e are right," he said, "to recognize that it takes a decade or more to develop military leaders. We cannot have more African American generals and admirals simply by wishing it to be the case." And, according to *The New York Times*, when officials at UCLA saw a dramatic decline in the admissions rate for black and Hispanic freshmen in 1998 (thanks to the new color-blind policy imposed by Proposition 209), the chancellor, Albert Carnesale, began calling minority admitees to assure them that they would be welcome at UCLA.

Yes, these minority soldiers and students have received preferential attention from governmental agents because of their race. But is there really anything wrong with the racial ethics of Secretary Cohen or of Chancellor Carnesale? They are simply trying to integrate blacks and Hispanic Americans into important venues in our society without using quotas or lowering their standards. Their "offense" was inevitable once they became interested in the racial composition of their respective institutions. Yet, given America's history in racial matters, how could they have responsibly done otherwise? •

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The list to-do.

BOOKDUMB

By James Wood

Xerxes wept at the prospect that, 100 years on, not one of his soldiers would be alive. We feel the same, said Schopenhauer, while perusing publishers' catalogs, stunned at the prospect that none of the books before us will last a century. A list of the century's best novels in English, such as the Modern Library published last week, ought to make us feel the opposite of Schopenhauer; here, by some miracle of literary cryogenics, are the books that have lasted a century, and that may frozenly outlast many more.

Yet, oddly, lists are as depressing as catalogs, because both disclose the same thing: that only a very few books are truly great and truly longeval. A list is already an act of desperation, an aggravated mnemonic. To be put in a list is to be in refreshed danger of falling off it, and one recalls the original Elizabethan usage of "list," which meant to be enlisted in battle. Even the finest list is largely full of Xerxes's soldiers—posterity's corpses.

The Modern Library list is certainly not a fine list; it is unusually silly, both in design and in execution. The collective decision of the library's editorial board (overwhelmingly comprised of historians, not literary critics or writers), it demotes aesthetics and favors novels with "powerful content." Thus *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Darkness At Noon*, and *I, Claudius* are deemed better novels than anything by Theodore Dreiser, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, or Joseph Conrad. It is, of course, pointless to rank 100 novels: there are no meaningful criteria whereby *Lolita* (fourth on the list) can be judged 43 books better than Conrad's great *Nostromo*. And a list that purports to gather the century's best novels in English, but that omits Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Christina Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children*, Patrick White's *Voss*, and anything by Samuel Beckett, instantly soils itself.

Still, despite itself, the Modern Library list confirms a few truths and offers several pleasurable sensations. One is the sight of Gore Vidal, an editorial board member, agreeing to a list which omits any of his own fluorescent and vulgar novels, while voting for two great books by Saul Bellow: this is exactly the right way round, peon to pasha. Another, less trivial, confirmation is that the list accurately reflects, I think, the feebleness of postwar English fiction. It sometimes seems as if a treaty must have been signed in 1945, in Westminster, outlawing all artistic experiment, all seriousness and nobility in English fiction for the next 50 years. The last great English novelists were Lawrence and Woolf, and the trail went cold with Henry Green's beautiful novel *Loving*. Almost dutifully, the Modern Library includes William Golding's *Lord of The Flies*, along with novels by Graham Greene, Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch, and Elizabeth Bowen. But these are very small achievements alongside *Invisible Man* or *The Adventures of Augie March*.

Chiefly, the Modern Library list suggests that a century will not yield 100 great novels in one language, even a language as diasporan as English. Perhaps 30 of the selected novels are great. This in turn reminds us of another, and related, truth, which is that great novels do not really influence other great novels. More often than not, greatness is the culmination of something rather than its opening. *Ulysses*, for instance, which people always claim as enormously influential, is undeniably a great novel. But *Ulysses* was, in fact, the inheritor of a century of literary influence: Joyce's great innovation, the stream of consciousness, was the logical conclusion of the developments in this area by Flaubert, by Hamsun, by Dostoevsky, and by Chekhov. *Ulysses* had almost no influence at all on English fiction: Joyce and Woolf discovered stream of consciousness simultaneously. And, although it has had greater impact on American writing (Bellow, Pynchon, and DeLillo have all been influenced by Joyce), American fiction would look almost the same had Joyce never existed, for no American novelist—except perhaps Henry Roth—has really pushed the stream of consciousness to Joycean levels. The greatest books often close a development while appearing to open it. The best postwar American novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*, magnificently terminates and fulfills the line of Melville, Twain, and Whitman. It has had few imitators. In fact, bad books, like Paul Bowles's sensationalist *The Sheltering Sky* (number 97 on the Modern Library list), are often much more "influential" than great books.

Once we realize that greatness is always sparse, and often curiously isolated and unrepeatable, a list necessarily seems a peculiar foolishness. The novel, because it is the loosest of all aesthetic forms, is perhaps the hardest about which to generalize and the hardest to discriminate between. This is not to say that the act of discrimination is invalidated by the failure of any list, more that there is a great difference between ranking and discrimination. A list ranks things with the implication that everything is being ranked by one set of criteria. But lists rank things *only* because they are lists: Since a list must have lots of members, it must rank them. A list creates the phantom problem it so confidently appears to solve: where to list something. But if, instead, one works on the truer assumption that only about ten or 20 novels written in this century in English are really great, one has hardly enough books to compile a list, and the curious imperative of list-making quite falls away. This other activity, the activity beyond list-making, is called criticism—and might also be called reading. •

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CAMBODIA DISPATCH

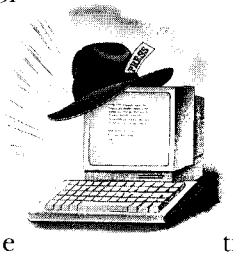
THE VOTING FIELDS

By Anna Husarska

PHNOM PENH

The indelible ink in which over 90 percent of Cambodia's 5,334,119 voters were made to dip their fingers as they exited polling stations last Sunday, July 26, is said to last for weeks. But it's unlikely to endure as long as it will take for the winner to be determined and then to organize what will almost certainly be a coalition-based government.

If history is bound to repeat itself, then Cambodia's leader Hun Sen set a disturbing precedent during the last elections, sponsored by the U.N., in 1993. Back then, Hun Sen refused to accept his defeat and insisted on sharing power with the victorious FUNCINPEC party led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh. And, in July 1997, Hun Sen staged a coup in which the prince was ousted and forced into exile, 40 top opposition military figures were executed, and Cambodians lost almost all hope of ever enjoying real democracy.



The coup cost Hun Sen his foreign support. Cambodia was not accepted to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations group, its seat at the U.N. remains empty, and the United States suspended millions of dollars in aid. To restore his legitimacy, the Cambodian strongman needed to win a credible vote of confidence from the Cambodian people. He achieved at least part of this goal when, two days after the vote, the U.N.-coordinated Joint International Observer Group declared that what they had observed was "a process which was free and fair to an extent that enabled it to reflect in a credible way the will of the Cambodian people."

So the election has the official stamp of legitimacy—but will Hun Sen win it? With preliminary and incomplete results from only two of the country's 21 provinces announced, Hun Sen's Cambodian Peoples' Party (CPP) was already declaring victory, claiming that it received more than 50 percent of the vote. The opposition parties, including Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP, founded by Sam Rainsy, a dissident from FUNCINPEC and a former minister of finance), cried foul, citing examples of fraud on the polling day and during the counting.

My own experience did not confirm these charges. I visited about 30 polling stations on election day; my two colleagues from the International Crisis Group (ICG) visited an equal number of election offices; and none of us witnessed any major fraud. However, a look at the names of many of the polling stations—at least on my itinerary—reveals a telling monotony. They included the Hun Sen Taakmal School, Hun Sen Saang School, Hun Sen Lycee Saang, and Hun Sen Suay Tany school. We then crossed three Hun Sen bridges, passing by a praying house inaugurated by Madame Hun Sen en route to the Hun Sen Development Center and Hun Sen hospital, with a stop at yet another Hun Sen school.

This last institution bore the inscription "DISCIPLINE BRINGS HONOR" at the top of its metal gate. To me, it smacked of "*Arbeit macht frei*," but my Cambodian assistants did not know whether it had been put there during the Khmer Rouge's reign or Hun Sen's. Suddenly, other memories came rushing back from my childhood in Poland: "Just take Lenin Avenue and, when you get to the Lenin monument, turn toward the Lenin steelworks."

Despite the lack of obvious fraud, there were some disturbing signs. At two of the Hun Sen schools where I was the first foreign observer to visit, practically none of the ballot boxes was sealed. What was even more troubling, however, was the sheepish attitude of the observers from the reputedly credible local election watchdog COMFREL. The representatives of the opposition parties were equally timid. Cambodia's voting regulations clearly specify that all ballot boxes must be sealed. So, if such blatant irregularity is going unopposed, it indicates a dangerous lack of assertiveness on the part of those who are supposed to be the guardians of legality.

The next day I visited the counting centers here in Phnom Penh. At the Tuol Sleng school, Sam Rainsy was in the lead with 2,381 votes. Next came Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC with 1,732, and then Hun Sen's CPP with 1,720. But it was not so much the actual results that attracted my attention as the expression of tragedy on the face of one of the counting station's officials. He was having a screaming match with others in the station when we arrived and then calmed down, assuring us that there were "no problems." His head in his hands, he then sank into silent despair. Since most officials in government offices belong to the CPP, it seemed safe to assume this one did as well. Presumably his party superior would not be pleased with the results at this counting station. This, I reasoned, might account for the man's despair—and also, perhaps, the shouting match we had stumbled upon. I repeat, however, that neither my colleagues from the ICG nor I witnessed anything during the voting day or the counting that resembled fraud.

In fact, I think the election was manipulated long before the actual balloting. According to our field analyst here, there was widespread intimidation, vote-buying, and campaign-related violence in the months running up to the election. (Indeed, the ICG called for its postponement.) Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International shared this view, and the United Nations made note of widespread human rights violations: some 98 percent of the 400 victims of alleged intimidation tactics, ranging from harassment to outright murder, were oppo-

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sition party workers. In addition, the parties' access to, and coverage by, the media was unequal. The CPP handed out electoral campaign goodies such as checkered scarves, rice, and MSG, a popular cooking condiment. CPP officials also held mock elections training prospective voters to cross box number 35 (CPP). The lesson was repeated until all those taking part crossed the correct box, a CPP official told me with pride. (I could see that, for him, discipline does *macht* honor.) The CPP also ran an underhanded recruitment campaign in which, sometimes in exchange for gifts, unsuspecting Cambodians were tricked into putting their thumbprints in a book—inadvertently signing up for CPP membership. Those ink stains most likely made a far more indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of the Cambodian people than the ones they were left with at the voting booths.

Does this mean that the elections should be called invalid and not recognized? Probably not, because the international community is obviously not ready to isolate Hun Sen. But it would be refreshing to hear some truth about what took place: the elections were not free or fair; they were merely the best that Cambodia can produce at this moment—and the most that the international community is willing to push for. •

Is there an anti-missile gap?

PLAYING DEFENSE

By Jacob Heilbrunn

As an intercontinental ballistic missile streaks from the Middle East toward the United States, an apoplectic American general stands before an array of flashing computer consoles. Grabbing a red telephone, he exclaims, "Mr. President, I can't shoot it down! We don't have a defense. There's nothing I can do about it." Does this sound like a scene from a Hollywood thriller? Guess again. It's an excerpt from a new videotape made by the Center for Security Policy, a think tank run by former Reagan administration official Frank Gaffney. The videotape's title: "America the Vulnerable."

Until a few weeks ago, the video might have seemed the stuff of right-wing paranoia. Gaffney himself has consistently been the hardest of the hard-liners. But then, in July, a bipartisan commission led by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld released its report on missile technology. Overnight, the debate changed.

The report said that official U.S. intelligence assessments have grossly underestimated the time it would take countries such as Iran or North Korea to develop and field an intercontinental ballistic missile. According to the report, these countries are using huge underground laboratories (invisible to U.S. spy satellites) to test weaponry, and it would take them only five years, not the 15 predicted by the Clinton administration's November 1995 National Intelligence Estimate, to build it. "Concerted efforts by a number of overtly or potentially hostile nations to acquire ballistic missiles with biological or nuclear payloads," the report said, "pose a growing threat to the United States, its deployed forces and its friends and allies.... We are unanimous in our assessment of the threat, an assessment which differs from published intelligence estimates." Days later, Iran tested the Shahab-3 medium-range missile.

The Rumsfeld Commission set out to diagnose a problem—not to prescribe a solution. But for conservatives, who have been searching for a foreign policy wedge issue ever since the Berlin Wall fell, the report was heaven-sent. "If we do not decide now to deploy a rudimentary shield," *New York Times* columnist William Safire warned, "we run the risk of Iran or North Korea or Libya building the weapon that will enable it to get the drop on us." "It's a missile-gap problem," says Frank Gaffney. Gaffney had just gotten off the phone with an adviser to Steve Forbes—who, like every other GOP presidential contender from George W. Bush to Gary Bauer, plans to back a missile defense program come 2000.

Ever since March 1983, when Ronald Reagan—to the astonishment of his own advisers—announced in a nationwide address that the United States would develop a space-based missile defense known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, liberals and conservatives have fought over the idea. Democrats argued that arms control was the only way to go. A leakproof, invulnerable missile shield was impossible to build, they said, not to mention prohibitively expensive. In the end, the skeptics won. Although Reagan himself never abandoned the dream of SDI, he also turned out to be a great arms controller. He signed sweeping arms-reduction agreements with Mikhail Gorbachev. Gaffney and other hawks resigned from the Pentagon in protest.

But the demise of the Soviet empire did not truly settle the dispute: Missile defense advocates argued, with some plausibility, that the threat of SDI had persuaded the Kremlin that it could not keep up with American technology and would have to cut an arms-control deal. Today, the debate continues, with the arms-control crowd arguing for further treaties with Russia, while SDI advocates have shifted to calling for a more limited ground-based missile defense system. "Is the threat of a small-scale attack comparable to the still-massive arsenal deployed by the Russians?" asks Alton Frye of the Council on Foreign Relations. "Our first priority must remain reducing and managing exorbitant stockpiles left over from the cold war." Richard Garwin, a member of the Rumsfeld Commission, agrees: "The only real threat to the survival of the United States is the thousands of Russian nuclear warheads."

And so does the Clinton administration. Vice Presi-

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dent Al Gore has championed arms-control agreements with Russia and the newly independent states, and, in 1996, the administration pushed the START II treaty through the Senate. Moreover, in September 1997, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright signed a package of agreements with the foreign ministers of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus that would turn the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty into a multilateral one.

A number of events, though, have disrupted the arms-control process, supplying the pro-missile defense lobby with fresh ammunition. For one thing, the Russian Duma has refused to ratify START II, which remains in limbo. Then there is North Korea's announcement that it has become an official merchant of death; the regime has declared its readiness to sell missile technology to any country capable of paying for it. India and Pakistan have missiles; both have detonated nuclear bombs. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is stalled in the U.S. Senate, and such treaties have routinely been flouted, anyway: "Some participants in those agreements have cheated," the Rumsfeld Commission said. The commission also said that "North Korea, Iran and Iraq, as well as India and Pakistan, are at the forefront of this group.... They have extensive access to technology, information and expertise from developed countries such as Russia and China." Add fairly porous American technology controls and you have a recipe for disaster.

If the right has rediscovered a potentially divisive campaign issue, the technology itself remains highly dubious. So far, tests of space-based SDI systems have been less than reassuring, despite ten years of work and close to $50 billion spent on development. Nor have ground-based systems enjoyed much more success. The most recent failure came during tests of the Lockheed-run project known as Theater High-Altitude Area Defense—THAAD. During a test in May, THAAD went thunk, exploding after a mere five seconds in the air.

It was the fifth-straight failure, and it backed up the warnings sounded by yet another panel on missile defense: in February, in an important 76-page study called the "Welch Report," a 16-member panel of missile experts led by retired Air Force General Larry Welch took a very critical view. "[T]he drive for early capability is proving to be counterproductive," the report said, leading to "a rush to failure."

The question, though, is whether near-term failure can evolve into a long-term success to counter what is clearly a frightful menace posed by countries such as Iran. Here conservatives exude more than optimism. When asked about technological questions, they throw off assurances—"We're beyond the technological debate," says the Heritage Foundation's Baker Spring—and find other sources of blame for the failure, until now, to build an effective ground-based defense. Their favorite target: the ABM Treaty, signed by the United States and Soviet Union in 1972, which prohibits the development of a nationwide missile defense. "Fundamentally, the problem remains dealing with the ABM Treaty," says Henry Cooper, who heads the pro-SDI organization High Frontier and was director of SDI programs in the Bush White House. "We will waste enormous amounts of money, throwing money at solutions that are not politically effective, because of the treaty.... We've wasted the better part of two billion on national missile defense. The administration has curtailed all programs," instead of investing in workable ones, Cooper says.

For example, missile defense advocates say, the government has not considered what looks like a very promising prospect: the further development of AEGIS. AEGIS is a super-high-tech defense system for naval ships, designed to protect them from aircraft and, in particular, air-to-surface missiles. The Heritage Foundation and many SDI activists insist that it's possible to transform AEGIS into an anti-ballistic-missile defense. The technological assumptions behind this theory may be iffy, but these activists complain that the administration's attachment to the ABM Treaty has prevented it from even looking into the idea.

Most conservatives call for junking the ABM Treaty itself. A 38-page, single-spaced memorandum prepared for the Heritage Foundation by the legal firm of Hunton & Williams maintains that the entire treaty is now defunct because the Soviet Union, the other signatory, no longer exists. Heritage rests its argument on the doctrine of *rebus sic stantibus*—that states may assert a fundamental change of circumstances that render a treaty null and void.

This is a bit of a stretch. After all, Russia is the successor state of the Soviet Union and has assumed the obligations of the ex-USSR. Still, the United States might look into amending the treaty in order to allow the development of a limited missile defense—something that could thwart small-scale launches by rogue nations but wouldn't seriously alter the U.S.-Russian military balance. This, at least, is something that seems technologically feasible, according to Richard Garwin. "One could do something about catching those [North Korean] missiles in boost phase," he says. "Rather than amending the whole ABM Treaty, we should go to the Russians and say, 'This is what we would like to do.' "

Of course, the Russians, who are proving increasingly obstreperous in nuclear negotiations, may have been the ones who provided the Iranians, North Koreans, and Iraqis with some of the knowledge and material to help build ballistic missiles in the first place. And, while the Russians might be sympathetic, they also know the difficulty of constructing a successful defense system all too well. Russia, after all, is the one nation that has a missile defense system—it's a cold war holdover that surrounds Moscow. As Herbert York, former science adviser to John F. Kennedy, observes, it didn't do the Russians much good when Mathias Rust flew straight into Red Square in a single-engine plane. "That's the norm," says York. "I don't believe a defense can be built against someone else's missile in a sneak attack." As America becomes aware of its vulnerability, however, the pressure for some kind of response—whether preemptive military strikes or a limited missile defense—will become inexorable. •

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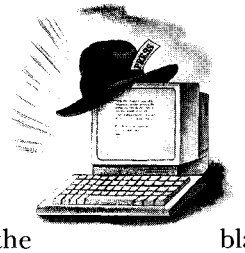
CINCINNATI DISPATCH

CITIZEN CARL

By Arthur Allen

Carl H. Lindner Jr. is a behind-the-scenes kind of billionaire, but on July 2 he was on the front page of his hometown paper and happy about it. Three of the four previous days running, that same front page of *The Cincinnati Enquirer* had been branded with a black-bordered apology to Chiquita Brands International Inc., the fruity jewel in the crown of Lindner's corporate empire. The apology represented a full retreat from an 18-page investigative series on Chiquita that the paper had run in May. That series, a humiliated *Enquirer* now proclaimed, was "untrue and created a false and misleading impression of Chiquita's business practices."

Why? Because the reporter, Mike Gallagher, had allegedly lied to his editors, telling them he was leaked 2,000 voice mail messages from inside the company, when, instead, he had allegedly sneaked into the voice mail system illegally. Gallagher has refused any comment on the case. The facts that the voice mails were nonetheless authentic and that other, legally obtained, evidence seemed to substantiate the article were apparently beside the point. In addition to firing Gallagher, paying Chiquita more than $10 million, and generally groveling at Lindner's feet, the *Enquirer* erased the 30-story, 55,000-word series from its Web site. Silence, gloomy and pestilent as a Honduran plantation in the rainy season, descended on the newsroom. "YES, THEY HAVE NO BANANAS," was the headline in *Citybeat*, the local free weekly.



Now the *Enquirer* front page showed Lindner in a different kind of triumph. In a picture above the fold, the wispy-haired 79-year-old was hugging the unlovely Marge Schott, principal owner of the Cincinnati Reds. Schott had signed a memorandum of understanding to build a new riverfront ballpark with taxpayer money. While Schott and Lindner embraced, a grassroots effort was growing to build the stadium on another site where construction could be finished faster and the stadium would help urban renewal. But Lindner's downtown business empire looms above the river, and since he's one of the Reds' largest shareholders—and rumored to be interested in eventually buying the team—the *Enquirer* played it as if Lindner's imprimatur meant a done deal. After all, it was partly thanks to Lindner—who has donated heavily to five of Cincinnati's city council members and two of the three county commissioners—that city officials had approved the plan.

The picture of Lindner and Schott thus suggests a question that few in the media have paused to consider in the aftermath of the contested Chiquita story. Whatever the series' merits, can it really get a fair hearing in a town as dominated by Carl Lindner as Cincinnati is?

The Reds and Chiquita are just two strands in Lindner's vast web of influence. Though he started small (Lindner reportedly dropped out of high school at 14 to help in the family dairy business), Linder eventually earned vast wealth buying and selling pieces of hundreds of businesses—including many big Cincinnati companies. The $13 billion Lindner empire currently includes an insurance company, an annuity company, and a bank. He has sold his media properties—including, in 1975, the *Enquirer*—though in 1985 he made a failed takeover bid for Gannett.

Staunch conservatives, Lindner and his family have supported groups like Americans for Tax Justice, the National Right to Life Committee, and Citizens for Community Values, a right-wing "decency" campaign that voiced opposition to Larry Flynt and the gallery that displayed Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs in 1990. But, when it comes to helping out politicians, Lindner's no ideologue. From 1991 to 1996, he gave to the campaigns of 53 members of Congress. He gave to Clinton, he gave to Dole, he gave to Newt Gingrich, and he gave to Richard Gephardt. This led to a memorable moment during a 1996 gala performance at Washington's Ford's Theater: Comedienne Paula Poundstone suddenly pointed to Lindner, seated behind Clinton in the audience, and asked, with mock naïveté, "Why does the president know the banana guy?"

Lindner has donated $100 million to charities over the past decade. He's sponsored swimming pools and churches, tennis courts and police rescue squads. He's underwritten a black urban development bank and a campaign to raise levies for Ohio public schools. And much of this giving seems sincerely motivated. Lindner has bought Reds tickets for a few thousand poor old people and provided T-shirts and bottled water for ushers at a street festival—without so much as a press release. On his rounds about town, Lindner hands out cards that read: "ONLY IN AMERICA. GEE, AM I LUCKY." In the 1980s, Lindner brought businesses to Cincinnati while other Midwestern cities rusted. The skyline over the Ohio River was etched with Lindner buildings: Chiquita, Provident Bank, American Financial, Penn Central. Lindner firms employ 12,000 area residents.

The flip side of Lindner's generosity, however, is a willingness to throw his weight around. In 1993, the *Enquirer* published a four-part series on Lindner's personal and business history. Lindner, who never talks to reporters, didn't like it. Fortunately for him, two big convenience store chains in Cincinnati, Thriftway (since sold to Winn-Dixie) and United Dairy Farmers, were run by Lindner's brothers, Richard and Robert. They yanked the *Enquirer* from their stores for several months.

Lindner was also quick to vent his displeasure over

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this May's Chiquita story. Two weeks after the series was published, an *Enquirer* columnist reported that Lindner had withdrawn a promised $250,000 contribution to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra because the *Enquirer's* publisher, Harry Whipple, was on the orchestra's board. (It wasn't until after the *Enquirer* settled with Chiquita that Linder wrote his check to the symphony.)

Meanwhile, Gallagher, who had focused his series on Chiquita's alleged misuse of its clout in Honduras, was about to learn how much influence Lindner could wield in his own backyard. Before the ink was dry on the settlement between Chiquita and Gannett, Chiquita filed a defamation lawsuit against Gallagher, and a local special prosecutor and the FBI have reportedly started a criminal wiretapping investigation. Some of the key officials connected with that probe have ties to Lindner. Judge Norbert Nadel, who grabbed the case from another judge on procedural grounds, received a total of $825 in donations from the Lindner family in his 1990 and 1996 campaigns for office. The prosecutor, also a recipient of Lindner campaign contributions, recused himself.

Public opinion—a considerable factor when you think about the jury pool for a possible criminal trial—is heavily pro-Lindner, at least in part because of all the jobs and charitable contributions he's spread around. Last fall, around the time Chiquita learned that the *Enquirer* was investigating its activities in Central America, Lindner gave $1.5 million to the Catholic archdiocese in Cincinnati for seven inner-city schools. Two days after the *Enquirer* series came out, the Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarcyzk wrote Lindner: "I am sorry for the pain you must be suffering as a result of recent items in the public press.... I remain grateful to you for your long and generous participation in the public life of our city." Chiquita included the letter in its court filing.

The *Enquirer* series on Chiquita was hackishly written and clumsily edited; it lacked context and polish. But the first reports about the *Enquirer's* apology seemed to take note only of these deficiencies, lumping the series together with Stephen Glass's tales in this magazine and similar concoctions by a *Boston Globe* columnist.

Yet the *Enquirer* deserves praise for at least trying to shine the spotlight on a formidable target. And, even though Chiquita officials insist the stories generally are false, the detailed allegations that Gallagher and his colleague, Cameron McWhirter, assembled—that Chiquita officials set up various companies to hide ownership of Honduran land and evade union rules; that it bribed Colombian officials to assure the use of docks to store Chiquita products; that its private guard force behaved thuggishly; and that it maneuvered to prevent the Panamanian foreign minister from cutting a deal with the European Union that would have hurt Chiquita—have not yet been refuted in specific detail.

In fact, the Securities and Exchange Commission, which got a copy of the voice mails, has given no indication it won't use them to delve into Chiquita's overseas business practices. Investigative journalists who've nosed around Chiquita over the years think the series was plausible. "There's no question of the accuracy of it at all. At all," says Jim Toedtman, *Newsday's* Washington bureau chief and author of a 1997 series on Chiquita and Lindner. "The series had the ring of believability."

Perhaps the only journalist knowledgeable about Chiquita who's not rising to defend the story is Gallagher himself. According to colleagues at the *Enquirer*, he's put his house on the market and left town with his wife and two small children. One theory holds that Gallagher hasn't spoken out because he plans to use still-unpublished information about Chiquita as leverage against the company: if Lindner won't settle, the theory goes, Gallagher will air more dirty laundry in open court.

But a Cincinnati judge might not let Gallagher do it. Apart from any direct influence Lindner may have, this city has a history of favoring the interests of local big business over free speech considerations. A case in point was Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble's successful 1991 bid to get a court to subpoena the records of more than 35 million calls from hundreds of thousands of Cincinnati-area phones in order to track down P&G officials who'd leaked internal information to *The Wall Street Journal.*

Of course, Lindner would argue that the *Enquirer* story has nothing to do with freedom of the press. To read the Chiquita complaint is to see how Chiquita and, presumably, Lindner himself do not distinguish between aggressive reporting and enemy business practices. The suit charges that Gallagher engaged in a "conspiracy" to "defame and smear Chiquita by authoring a series of false and defamatory stories.... There has seldom, if ever, been a defendant in a libel case who has exhibited such acute and calculated malice toward his target." Patrick Manley, an attorney for a man involved in a separate lawsuit against Chiquita, has said that Chiquita lawyers who questioned him in the Gallagher suit seemed to believe he paid Gallagher to write the series.

One can only hope that, whatever the outcome of the Gallagher case, it doesn't prevent the *Enquirer* from keeping the public informed about important issues facing the city. Which brings us back to that baseball stadium Lindner wants to build with Marge Schott. A petition drive by restaurateur Jim Tarbell (yes, he's a distant relative of Ida Tarbell, the muckraker who took on Standard Oil around the turn of the century) is pushing a ballot initiative to build the alternative park. Schott, who has gained a degree of national notoriety by making admiring remarks about Hitler and denigrating ones about blacks, objects, saying her fans will be afraid to go there. Tarbell, a onetime hippie scenemaker who looks a bit like Nikita Krushchev, was appointed to the city council this summer and isn't capitulating. Addressing a group of 150 signature collectors in July, Tarbell was fired up, telling the crowd that their campaign was about more than just baseball; it was about how democracy itself would function in Cincinnati. How will the post-Chiquita *Enquirer* cover *this* story? It's a slippery question.

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The cheap thrill of HMO-bashing.

COSMETIC SURGERY

By Jonathan Cohn

Okay, admit it. It's been fun kicking around the managed-care industry for the last few weeks. If you're like most Americans you now get your health insurance through some form of managed care—an HMO or some variant that restricts your choice of doctor and your ability to receive treatments. While the polls suggest you haven't had any problems with your plan personally, there's a good chance you know somebody who has. The polls also show that you've heard so many horror stories by now—my favorite is the one about the guy who got castrated because his HMO mistakenly denied a more expensive, less severe treatment for prostate cancer—that you're not quite sure you'll be fully covered if you get truly sick.

And in thinking all of this you are quite right. Managed care started out as a progressive alternative to expensive and wasteful fee-for-service medicine—a system that encouraged unnecessary treatments and specialist visits while skimping on preventive care and excluding many less-affluent Americans. But the for-profit industry has mangled managed care, turning it into a corporate behemoth more concerned with profit margins than patients. "Do no harm" has become "Do no harm to stockholders."

Of course, if you happen to be a liberal, then sticking it to the insurance industry has been doubly fun these last few weeks. After all, this is the same industry that torpedoed President Clinton's comprehensive health care bill four years ago. Clintoncare had its problems, perhaps enough to merit its ultimate failure. But many of the insurance industry's arguments were simply untrue. For example, it was not Clintoncare that was going to restrict people's choice of doctors and impose rationing. The private insurance industry itself was planning to do that—and has. Now it's payback time.

And yet, when the fun is all over in a few weeks, will we have significantly improved the quality of health care in America? Probably not. Congress is on the verge of passing something that can be billed as a patient-protection law, but it's hard to imagine it will do much good. The Republicans are offering only sham reforms full of loopholes. (For details, see "Mangling Care," TNR, August 10.) And, while the Democrats' intentions are more sincere, their reforms would make only modest improvements. Nothing on the table now challenges the contradictions built into our health care system. As a result, nothing on the table now seems capable of offering long-term peace of mind to the millions of Americans who are legitimately worried about what might happen to them if they become seriously ill.

Flash back to July 16, when the Democrats leading the charge for HMO reform received what they took to be some very good news. For months, the insurance industry and its lobby had been making one potent argument against enacting a patient-protection law: If government interfered with HMO decisions about health care, then HMOs would lose their ability to control costs. Premiums would rise. Employers, in turn, would pass those higher costs along to their employees—or, in some cases, drop coverage altogether.

It was a rather brazen argument. After all, these same lobbyists were simultaneously claiming that reform was unnecessary because the insurance industry was providing high quality care already. So why would requiring them to do so raise costs? The insurers claimed the new regulations would add layers of unnecessary bureaucracy. But the real reason was that at least sometimes managed-care firms do, in fact, cut costs by sacrificing treatment that would benefit patients.

For example, one of the issues now at the heart of the debate is whether HMOs should always have to pay for emergency room care. The papers have been full of stories about people suffering from life-threatening injuries, or what they thought were life-threatening injuries, who took themselves to emergency rooms—only to have HMOs deny coverage either because the hospital visit wasn't pre-approved or because the injury turned out to be less serious than originally thought. Since it's hard to know sometimes whether you have a real emergency or not—is it appendicitis or just some bad chili?—it seems reasonable to require HMOs to pay for emergency room treatment anytime a "prudent layperson" would think such treatment necessary. According to a recently published Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study, that would disqualify about half of the current coverage denials

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HMOs issue for emergency room care.

And yet the great mystery was just how high a comprehensive package of patient protections might push premiums. The anti-reform lobbies were only too happy to supply an answer. They commissioned studies from accounting firms like KPMG Peat Marwick and Milliman and Robertson, which made worst-case assumptions and produced estimates of a sudden increase in health care premiums ranging from three percent to 23 percent—an increase that would surely make insurance prohibitively expensive for millions, particularly those employed by small businesses. Insurance lobbyists and Republicans seized upon these numbers, casting themselves not as opponents of reform but as protectors of the needy.

But then the nonpartisan CBO weighed in. This authoritative source found that even the most sweeping of the HMO bills on the agenda—the "Patients' Bill of Rights," sponsored by Congressman John Dingell and Senator Edward Kennedy—would only cause a modest premium hike: about four percent, or about two dollars per person per month. Kennedy-Dingell supporters crowed. "Seven cents per day is little to pay to ensure that patients receive the health care coverage they have been promised by their health plans," pronounced a press release from Families USA, a leading health care reform lobby.

But the CBO report was not quite vindication. The reforms in Kennedy-Dingell are cheap because they are, in many ways, ineffective. Like the addage says: You get what you pay for.

For example, one of the chief complaints HMO consumers have now is that they can no longer choose their own doctor—rather, they must select from lists of providers who have contracts with the HMO. This is a matter of some inconvenience if you just got new insurance and your family doctor isn't on the list. It can be a more serious problem if you need specialty care for a serious ailment and the specialist you need isn't on the plan. To rectify this, reformers have long suggested that all health care plans offer everybody a so-called point-of-service option, which would allow you to see a doctor outside of your plan.

At first glance, this looks like a serious strategic blow to managed care. After all, one of the most effective tools HMOs have for bringing down costs is their ability to negotiate lower rates with physicians. While, say, an ophthalmologist might normally charge $2,000 for cataract surgery, he might agree to charge $1,500 if it meant a steady stream of patients from a large managed-care organization—a kind of group discount. But, if a doctor knew that any patient could come to his office, even if he didn't negotiate a special rate, then he'd have no incentive to bargain with the HMO.

That, of course, could return us to the bad old days of double-digit annual health care inflation. So the Kennedy-Dingell plan tries to make up for this by allowing plans to charge more for point-of-service options. And it doesn't restrict how high those costs can be. According to the CBO, that would mean only a few people would end up choosing the point-of-service option—since insurance companies would make it prohibitively expensive.

Consider, next, what has become the most controversial of the patient-protection provisions: the right to sue your HMO when you believe it denied medically necessary treatment. As you may have read by now, the courts have generally interpreted a federal law called the Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) as a blanket liability exemption for insurance companies in most cases. Currently, if an HMO denies you treatment and you suffer, you can sue. But you can only recoup the cost of the treatment—you cannot get awards for pain and suffering. Some federal judges, powerless when such cases come before them, have been quite publicly bemoaning this fact for some time—with good reason. Even if you think we have too many lawsuits already, it's hard to justify why insurance companies—and insurance companies alone—should not be held accountable, in a court of law, for the consequences of their decisions.

But the CBO concluded that ERISA reform would, on its own, produce a premium hike of only 1.4 percent. Although the CBO was careful to indicate that this was a speculative estimate—experts have widely divergent views on the matter—it was at least based on defensible assumptions. For instance, the CBO noted that there are already some plans (mostly sponsored by state or local government) which do not enjoy the ERISA exemption, and they don't get sued very often. The CBO also assumed that insurance companies could preempt some lawsuits simply by clarifying their rules for treatment approval and doctor referrals. In other words, an HMO could still deny you certain kinds of expensive but arguably necessary treatments, just so long as it had notified you that such denials were a condition of your coverage. And what does notifying you mean? More pages of fine print at the back of the already thick book of mind-numbing regulations that you and every other managed-care subscriber already receive.

Of course, the strongest patient-protection measures

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anticipate these problems and attempt to avoid them by setting some basic ground rules about what HMOs may and may not deny. Kennedy-Dingell specifically requires that HMOs pay for experimental AIDS and cancer treatments. It outlaws the use of any financial incentives that might result in medically substandard care and prohibits plans from interfering with the "manner or setting" of "medically necessary" treatment. Finally, Kennedy-Dingell also bans "gag rules"—that is, an insurance company cannot prohibit a physician from discussing more expensive treatment options with patients. (The Republican plans include weaker versions of some, but not all, of these ideas.)

These are among the most crucial provisions in the entire patient-protection effort, because they strike at the heart of the managed-care cost-control apparatus. A big reason health care got so expensive in the 1970s and 1980s was that doctors ordered up superfluous tests just to test hunches—since insurance companies would pay the bills no matter what. So the insurance companies decided to link doctor incomes to the total cost of the procedures and medication doctors prescribe. They offered bonuses for doctors who ran up fewer costs; they had gag rules to discourage doctors from spreading the word about expensive therapies or procedures. And, when doctors got too expensive, the plans would simply "deselect"—that is, fire—them.

This was certainly a good way to cut costs. But it wasn't always a good way to take care of sick people—particularly after for-profit HMOs began to supplant nonprofit HMOs as the arbiters of sound medical judgment. As economic journalist Robert Kuttner reported in a pair of articles for *The New England Journal of Medicine* in May, one Humana plan barred doctors from "conveying the possibility of [hospital] admission to the plan member" without prior authorization from Humana officials. "When doctors' earnings are influenced by large financial incentives not to treat patients," Kuttner wrote, "the ethical conflict of interest is stark."

Insofar as these cost-cutting methods have sacrificed the well-being of patients, it makes sense to curtail them. But having prohibitions on such methods in the law is one thing—enforcing them quite another. In theory, enforcement under Kennedy-Dingell comes from two sources: patients, who can appeal to review boards or sue in the courts, and government officials, who can investigate and prosecute plans that violate the law. But many plans already have appeals mechanisms, and few people take advantage. The apparent reason: The insurance process is so maddeningly complex most people either don't know about appeals or simply throw up their hands when they get denied care. And, while it's a good idea to embolden the state and federal officials charged with overseeing insurance plans, keep in mind that these are the same chronically overworked officials who have their hands full going after bigger cases of fraud.

Besides, even with the most tightly worded laws, insurance companies could still pursue their traditional cost-cutting methods—just so long as they didn't *look* like they were pursuing their traditional cost-cutting methods. If a doctor is running up bills that are too expensive because, say, he's a very good doctor and thus gets a lot of very sick patients, a plan can always find some other ostensible rationale for cutting him off. Or, at the very least, a plan can always come up with an excuse good enough to force a lengthy and protracted court battle with the physician.

Now, the CBO (and I) could certainly be wrong. The protections in a strong bill like Kennedy-Dingell could have a significant impact on quality of care. The courts, for example, could interpret terms like "medically necessary" in the broadest possible sense. The appeals and lawsuits could have a chilling effect on insurers. But then we're back to the demoralizing paradox of regulating for-profit HMOs: done right, it will almost certainly cost more money. And that will mean one of two things. Either insurance will become too expensive for many people, or the insurance companies will cut their costs by insuring only healthier people.

Indeed, we've seen this chain of events before—after 1996, when Kennedy teamed up with Senator Nancy Kassebaum to pass what was supposed to be a groundbreaking health care reform measure. In theory, under the Kennedy-Kassebaum law an insurer would have to offer coverage to any customer who had previously been covered, even if that person had preexisting conditions. But the Kennedy-Kassebaum law didn't really restrict how much the insurer could charge for that coverage. So now many insurance companies simply charge more for customers who are likely to run up big health care bills. (And that's logical: if they couldn't charge more for consumers with preexisting conditions, it would destroy the whole insurance system, since people would never buy insurance until they got sick.)

In addition, plans already "cherry pick" healthy people by marketing aggressively to groups that are predominantly young and healthy. To take one familiar example, many plans now offer deep discounts on health club benefits as an enticement. The stated rationale is that exercise keeps you healthy, but there's a second, unstated rationale, too. If you chose this health plan over another option (or, as is so often the case, if your employer chose this plan over another option), chances are you're the type of person who cared about exercising in the first place—that is, you're younger and healthier than the average American.

None of this is to say that patient protection, in its most aggressive form, would be pointless. The prudent layperson emergency room standard, for example, would tangibly improve the quality of health care in America. But this approach to HMO reform—adding law upon law and then dealing with the negative consequences each time—is fundamentally unsatisfactory. In order to make significant progress, it would take dozens of specific regulations, filling reams of paper, requiring hours of congressional debate. As it is, the Kennedy-

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Dingell bill would substantially increase the paper flow in health care by requiring doctors to keep more data on patient histories and requiring plans to keep more data on patient satisfaction and demographics. If there were no alternative, a good patient-protection bill would be worth passing, just barely. But is there really no alternative?

Of course not. And, in the last few months, one surprisingly honest alternative has come from the right.

Conservatives understand and confront one basic truth about health care: it is an imperfect market. In a normal market system, the purchaser of a product is the one who uses it—if you want a car, you buy yourself a car, and you weigh the trade-offs between cost and quality. You may want a Corvette, but you don't think it's worth an extra $20,000; so you buy a Toyota instead. In health care, of course, the party that buys health care is not usually the party that receives it. The majority of Americans receive health insurance through their employers; their employers, in turn, negotiate with one or several plans over cost.

Hypothetically, employers are supposed to consider the interests of their employees when they strike these bargains. But, as you might expect, the employers are usually most concerned with premiums. So the market system breaks down. Even when people want better insurance, they often have little or no ability to get it. Thus, the conservatives say, the answer to our health care problem is to break the link between employment and health care—that is, to give consumers the direct power to purchase their own insurance.

This certainly sounds like a good idea. The yoking together of jobs and health insurance, after all, is a historical accident. In World War II, wage controls prohibited employers from enticing workers with higher salaries, so they offered health care as a fringe benefit instead. We've been stuck with the system ever since. Government could break this link by creating purchasing pools, allowing small firms and individuals to band together, thus offering their employees more options from which to choose; by changing the tax treatment of health insurance, so that it's not prohibitively expensive for individuals and the self-employed; and by encouraging the use of individual savings accounts (known as medical savings accounts, or MSAs) that make individuals bear more of the costs of their own health care. All three ideas are in the bill the Republican House passed on July 24. Steve Forbes has indicated that he will make MSAs a cornerstone of his likely presidential campaign.

Unfortunately, while the instinct to empower consumers and expand choice is a healthy one, the conservative version of this idea has an overwhelming flaw—a flaw that becomes most apparent when you consider the probable impact of MSAs. An MSA is a special savings account into which you and your employer deposit money. If you get sick, you pay for your health care bills by withdrawing from the account, up to a certain limit, at which point your insurance kicks in. (When you start an MSA, you're generally required to take out a catastrophic insurance policy, which covers you in case of a really expensive ailment.) What you don't spend you keep.

Now, is an MSA a good bargain for you? Well, if you're young and healthy, it's a great deal. After all, you're probably not going to spend that MSA money, so you'll be that much richer. But, if you're not young or you're not healthy, you're probably going to opt for a more traditional insurance plan. You can see where this is going. If MSAs were widespread, you'd have a bifurcated insurance market: Healthy people would have MSAs, and sick people would have insurance. And, of course, since the pool of people in the traditional plans would then be sicker on average, the plans would have to charge higher premiums to cover the costs. A lot of these people would lose coverage, and even those who didn't would end up with all the quality problems people now face in the most restrictive managed-care plans. So you've improved quality for a few, more or less at the expense of others.

The MSA problem highlights the fundamental trouble with the conservative approach to health care quality reform. Conservatives properly recognize one way in which the current health care market fails, but they miss another: deep down, for-profit insurance companies don't really want to take care of sick people. After all, sick people cost money. As long as that is the case, and as long as the entities making decisions about health care want to make profits, quality of care will continue to be a low priority. As Arnold Relman, professor emeritus at Harvard Medical School, wrote recently in *The American Prospect*, we need to "accept the notion of health care as a social good rather than an economic commodity."

Not that accomplishing this would be easy. There are three alternatives today: sticking with the status quo; endless attempts to fine-tune the status quo through regulation; or enactment of a national health care system that guaranteed universal coverage, put a ceiling on overall costs, and then let the people—through their elected representatives—decide how to spend that money. While the third option would surely entail some painful rationing decisions of its own, those decisions would at least be made with the democratic involvement of voters, according to criteria that are bound to be more sensitive to the needs of patients.

National health insurance, of course, happens to be the preferred option of the most ardent advocates of patient protection—from Families USA to Ted Kennedy to Bill Clinton. They've settled on patient protection only because political realities will allow nothing more grandiose. But that, too, could change. After all, nobody thought that in 1998—with the memories of Clintoncare still so fresh—the nation would be talking about health care again. So for now, at least, don't feel guilty about HMO-bashing. Keep at it. At least until something better comes along. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

War; and More

Steven Spielberg's new film begins as a monumental epic; then it diminishes; and, by its finish, is baffling. **Saving Private Ryan** (Paramount), written by Robert Rodat, is about World War II in Europe. It begins on D-Day, June 6, 1944, at Omaha Beach in Normandy, an invasion for which the term "gigantic" shrinks. Then, not long after the Allies win a position in France, a U.S. captain named Miller is sent with a squad of seven to find a certain Private Ryan, a paratrooper who has landed farther inland. Ryan's three brothers have been killed in combat; he is the sole surviving brother. General Marshall himself has ordered that Ryan be found and sent home.

After some rugged difficulties, Ryan is located by Miller and his squad, two of whom were killed en route. Ryan's reaction to the news about his brothers is what we would expect. His reaction to his proposed rescue is not. The last long sequence is a fierce battle, in which Miller and his squad join Ryan's unit in an attempt to stop German forces from securing a bridge.

The war action of this long film is enclosed between two brief, cushiony present-day episodes in an American military cemetery in France. At the start an elderly man visits the cemetery with his family. At the close we learn who he is. He salutes; and the last image, like the first, is of the cemetery's American flag fluttering in the breeze.

The D-Day sequence, about 25 minutes long, is certainly one of the most powerful battle scenes ever put on film. D-Day has been recreated before, in *The Longest Day* (1962). I can't precisely compare the two versions, Spielberg's and Andrew Marton's. The latter's account was immense and gripping, as I recall it, but Spielberg gives us much more of the suffering, the slaughter, and the unflattering detail. (American soldiers shoot surrendering Germans whose hands are in the air.) Spielberg constructed his version with large and small waves of action, great tides alternating with intimate pain and will. His usual colleagues, the cinematographer Janusz Kaminski and the editor Michael Kahn, have helped him to make the whole battle, no matter how much we already know about it, newly astonishing, awesome, awful.

For me, who was glued to a radio on that June 6th, ankle deep in newspapers, no honor, no tribute, no regard can possibly be too much for the men who went ashore that day. But the film wasn't made solely to recreate that invasion, which is where the bafflement sets in. The film acts as if, from that large beginning, it moves to a special point; but it doesn't. Spielberg has said, "How do you find decency in the hell of warfare? That was what attracted me to the project." But every World War II film I can remember, and many other war films, have dealt with comradeship and sacrifice. *Saving Private Ryan* leaves us with the sense that a master director has made a film while searching for its unique point and has never quite found it.

The mission to find Private Ryan is, inevitably, smaller than the opening battle, but we expect it to reveal some large theme. The only element remotely like a theme is the question of whether the lives of these eight men should be risked in order to save the life of one man, but that is a very specific instance, confined to this action, not a matter of general relevance and depth.

Once the Private Ryan mission starts, the picture becomes a good war movie, not much more. Some novel twists—a duel between two snipers, an accident that discloses a roomful of Germans, a crisis with a little girl—spark the action, but on the whole we feel that we are once again in Movieland. And we don't know why. It's baffling.

Add to the disappointments the performance of Tom Hanks, usually an engaging deputy for us all, as the captain. His dialogue is a bit starchy—because he was a schoolteacher in civilian life, I guess!—but, unlike the men around him, he never seems to have quite burrowed into the earth of battle. Edward Burns, himself a filmmaker (*The Brothers McMullen*), gives Brooklyn sass to a recalcitrant member of the squad. Matt Damon sheds some sympathetic light on Private Ryan.

If a time-capsule is being prepared to be opened 100 years from now, make room in it for **There's Something About Mary** (Fox). When the people of 2098 see it, they will get a clear idea of the taboos of our time, because this raggedy farce makes a point of violating as many taboos as it can.

It's as if the writers, Ed Decter & John J. Strauss and Peter Farrelly & Bobby Farrelly, began by making a list. (The last two also directed.) What, the quartet presumably asked, are the subjects about which one is not permitted to

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Out of Sight. *An attractive bank robber breaks from jail. The FBI agent on his trail is an attractive woman. Cynical, witty, sexy, crime comedy-drama. (Reviewed 8/3/98)* **Passion in the Desert.** *Strangely credible, exquisitely made. Balzac's tale of a Napoleonic soldier's encounter in the desert with a female leopard. (7/6/98)* **The Thief.** *From Russia. A clever comedy-drama, about a charming rogue, turns out to be a grave political allegory. Acting, screenplay, directing all superior. (8/10/98)* **The Truman Show.** *From birth a man's entire life is on TV through secret cameras. Satire—not about him or TV but about us, who empower TV with our addiction. (6/29/98)* **—SK**

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joke? Then they proceeded to make jokes about them—cruelty to animals, people with braces on their legs, gay men, and, in gross detail, masturbation. These and many more are packed—nay, pummeled—into the screenplay. Woven around them is a story of sorts, purposely porous to allow easy entry for gags. And, to underline the casualness, a pair of minstrels wanders through the film, singing appropriate numbers, which is a device I can't remember since *Cat Ballou* (1965).

Ted, a Rhode Island high school boy in the 1960s, with braces on his teeth, is miraculously asked by the prettiest girl in class, Mary, to escort her to the senior prom. When he calls for her, he visits the bathroom in her house, gets his equipment caught in his zipper, and has to be taken to the hospital. (Even before this the film has announced its laugh level.)

Years later, now a successful man, Ted cannot forget Mary. He hires a seedy private eye, Healy, to find her, which the eye does. She is now a physician in Miami. But Healy himself falls for her, lies to Ted about her present situation, and woos Mary. Many, many gags follow, some of them laugh-provoking, all of them vulgar.

Bernard Shaw said:

> I go to the theatre to be moved to laughter, not to be tickled or bustled into it, and that is why, though I laugh as much as anybody at a farcical comedy, I am out of spirits before the end of the second act, and out of temper before the end of the third, my miserable mechanical laughter intensifying these symptoms at every outburst.

Thus with this film and me.

Ben Stiller, who plays Ted, is a phenomenon of sorts. He is short, bowlegged, a model of misproportion; but when the camera stays fairly close to his face, he is the quintessence of latter-day TV-comedy playing: with broken sentences, repetitive phrases, choked utterances, all served up in an omelet of tacit feelings. Matt Dillon, as Healy, finds the right exaggeration to take his performance just over the border into burlesque sketch-playing. The gem in this rag pile is Cameron Diaz as Mary: quick, witty, pretty, warm. There *is* something about Mary. •

The heroic consciousness of Jane Austen.

The Birth of Inwardness

BY JAMES WOOD

Jane Austen founded character and caricature at the same time—which is the essentially satirical, essentially English approach to fictional character. Dickens learned from her that characters can survive on one big attribute and still be plump with life. Forster learned from her that characters do not have to change to be real; they should only reveal more of their stable essence as the novel proceeds. Yet at the same time, and most significantly, the first glimmerings of what would become Woolf's stream-of-consciousness are found in Austen; she invented a new, rapid semaphore for signaling a person's thought as it is happening. It is this innovation, the discovery of how to represent the brokenness of the mind's communication with itself, that constitutes her radicalism.

Still, Austen's heroines are not modern characters as we encounter them since Henry James (who, significantly, somewhat disliked her fiction). They do not change in the modern sense, because they do not really discover things about themselves. They discover cognitive novelties; they probe for rectitude. As the novel moves forward, certain veils are pierced and obstacles removed, so that the heroine can see the world more clearly. In the course of that process, more and more of the heroine's stable essence is revealed to us. Thus plot is inherently rational and problem-solving in Austen. "Rational" was one of Austen's favorite words, and it is used often by her heroines. The habitual stance of the Austen heroine is that of the reader, one who reads and reflects upon the material of the novel before her, and, when all that material is complete at the end of the novel, makes her decision. It is probably for this reason that readers so adore Austen's heroines—not because they are especially real or "rounded," but because, like us, they are readers of the novel in question, and thus on our side. Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, like Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, craves "the relief of quiet reflection." Elinor describes this process of reflection several times in *Sense and Sensibility*. When she reappraises Willoughby, she is "resolved not only upon gaining every new light as to his character which her own observation or the intelligence of others could give her, but likewise upon watching his behavior to her sister with such zealous attention, as to ascertain what he was and what he meant. . . ." Similarly, Elizabeth Bennet, at the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, finally sees Darcy as he really is, not as she mistook him—that is her triumph; she does not learn anything really decisive about herself. She is, at the end, perhaps, less proud and judgmental, but she has hardly transformed herself.

Emma Woodhouse is the nearest Austen came to creating a character who discovers something about herself. Like Elizabeth Bennet, she must rationally solve a problem—which is the problem of who is right for whom, and ultimately, who is right for her—and the novel allows her to conduct several disastrous experiments. To that extent, she learns, at the end of the novel, what we have always known about her, that she is blind, headstrong, and foolish. But she, too, is essentially stable, for she is incorrigible. Indeed, is not the incorrigibility of Austen's heroines what makes them so appealing? Do we not imagine that Emma will continue to act foolishly in the future, even with Mr. Knightley by her side? One of the reasons that we know from the beginning of the novel that Emma is essentially good but willful (as opposed to bad and hapless) is that we sense that Mr. Knightley loves her, and we feel that Mr. Knightley is a repository of the novel's highest values. A fairy-tale cradle protects Emma from real harm.

A comparison may be made with a modern heroine, Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Ralph Touchett is Isabel's higher understanding, her Mr. Knightley. Yet in James's tragic, psychological vision, Ralph cannot save Isabel from herself. She must make mistakes for herself. Emma, by contrast, makes mistakes on behalf of others; for herself, she makes the right choice, and chooses Mr. Knightley. In an early conversation, Mrs. Weston says to Mr. Knightley that Emma "will never lead any one really wrong." This observation the novel is about to prove untrue. But in the same conversation Mrs. Weston says that "she will make no lasting blunder," which is quite correct. Within this capsule, Emma's subjectivity rides.

Austen's heroines do not discover, then, what is best in themselves; they discover what is best *for* themselves and for others. Austen's work is not therapeutic but hermeneutic. As it happens,

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hermeneutic study was given its fullest development at this time by Friedrich Schleiermacher, the German Protestant theologian. But we know from contemporary texts that the words "hermeneutical" and "hermeneutics" were in wide currency in English long before Schleiermacher, and that they were applied to people as often as to the study of texts. Someone who understood other people, who attended to their secret meanings, who read people properly, might have been called hermeneutical. Schleiermacher himself stressed repeatedly that hermeneutics could be applied to ordinary conversation as well as to the Scriptures. In 1829, in his Academy Address "On the Concept of Hermeneutics," he referred to the art of reading "significant conversations," and added: "Who could move in the company of exceptionally gifted persons without endeavoring to hear 'between' their words, just as we read between the lines of original and tightly written books? Who does not try in a meaningful conversation, which may in certain respects be an important act, to lift out its main points, to try to grasp its internal coherence, to pursue all its subtle intimations further?"

This is what the Austen heroine does. Even the wild and undisciplined Emma is such a reader. When Mr. Knightley finally proposes to Emma, Austen writes: "While he spoke, Emma's mind was most busy, and, with all the wonderful velocity of thought, had been able—and yet without losing a word—to catch and comprehend the exact truth of the whole." This is the hermeneutic task of the Austen heroine, to which is added a distinctly Protestant, or even Evangelical, bent. For Austen's heroines read themselves, and carry their spirit inside them. In *Mansfield Park*, Henry Crawford asks Fanny for advice, and she replies: "We have all a better guide in ourselves, if we would attend to it, than any other person can be." Our inwardness is our God and our guide; we apply to it for aid.

The inwardness of Austen's heroines is precisely what makes them heroic in the novels. This is measurable, because Austen maintains a hierarchy of consciousness: the people who matter think inwardly, and everyone else speaks. Or rather: the heroines speak to themselves, and everyone else speaks to each other. The heroines are the only characters whose inner thought is represented. And this speaking to oneself is often a secret conversation, which Austen almost invented a new technique, a precursor of modernist stream-of-consciousness, to represent. We can watch the development of this technique. Her first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), has almost none of this kind of stream-of-consciousness. *Sense and Sensibility* abounds in

JANE AUSTEN, BY HER SISTER CASSANDRA

passages such as this one, in which Austen's notation of excited thought seems to strain to outgrow itself, yet stays inside conventional narrated thought:

> What felt Elinor at that moment? Astonishment, that would have been as painful as it was strong, had not an immediate disbelief of the assertion attended it. She turned towards Lucy in silent amazement, unable to divine the reason or object of such a declaration, and though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity and felt no danger of an hysterical fit, or a swoon.

Lucy has just told Elinor that she is engaged to Robert Ferrars's brother, and Elinor is revolving this shock in her mind. But Austen stays outside Elinor, noting her change of color, and calming the reader, as it were, with the promise that Elinor will not become hysterical. The reference to an external change—a change of color—is significant, for it suggests that Austen is using the idea of the stage, that a character will *physically* register a shock, on the outside. Austen's meaning, of course, is that Elinor is not like one of these stage-actors; Elinor is too calm to register agitation as anything more than an almost-invisible change of color. She thinks "in silent amazement," and is therefore inaccessible to us. ("What felt Elinor at that moment?") Elinor, in this sense, anticipates the later Austen heroines: from an almost-invisible blush, it is only a small increment for the novelist into the very mind of a character. At this moment, however, in Austen's development, we cannot enter Elinor's mind; her "silent amazement" is actually silent.

Pride and Prejudice (1813) allowed Austen to burst into the interior of her heroine, Elizabeth Bennet. But she rations a gradual increase in the reader's access. At first, Elizabeth resembles Elinor; she does not speak to herself, except in Austen's indirect report. Slowly, her intensity deepens, and Austen's registration of Elizabeth's self-conversation begins to gather its mass. When she first hears that Darcy has separated Bingley and Jane, she goes to her room, where "she could think without interruption of all that she had heard." Here Austen begins to expand the range of Elizabeth's mental revolutions, and we witness Elizabeth "exclaiming" to herself bitterly about how poorly Jane has been used: "All liveliness and goodness as she is! Her understanding excellent, her mind improved, and her manners captivating." But this self-exclamation soon ends, the agitation having brought on a headache. (A headache, tears, or sleep will often end the representation of female inwardness in early Austen, as it does also in Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*.) But only twenty pages later, Elizabeth is unbound. Darcy has written to her, and she has taken

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the letter with her on a walk. She is alone. As she reads it, she is burnt with shame, and her speech to herself is rapidly broken up into different stumbling inroads:

> "How despicably have I acted!" she cried.—"I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or blameable distrust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation!—Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly.—... Till this moment, I never knew myself."

This, in essence, is a stage soliloquy. In the course of *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816), Austen uses it with ever greater sophistication, dispensing with quotation marks, and blending the heroine's soliloquy with her own third-person narration, so that she is able to move in and out of a character as she pleases. At the same time, her heroine's mental speech loses the last tinctures of the staginess that still cling to Elizabeth's ("How despicably have I acted!"), becoming looser and more conversational. Fanny Price is seen thinking to herself much earlier in *Mansfield Park* than Elizabeth is seen doing the same in *Pride and Prejudice*, and of course Emma fills the entire book with her lively self-disputations: *Emma* is one large mental chamber. Where before Elizabeth had to roam outside to express her thoughts, Emma's thought arises in the most ordinary and domestic settings, among her puffs, powders, and billet-doux. Austen novelizes the soliloquy, in effect:

> The hair was curled, and the maid sent away, and Emma sat down to think and be miserable.—It was a wretched business, indeed!—Such an overthrow of everything she had been wishing for!—Such a development of everything most unwelcome!—Such a blow for Harriet!—That was the worst of all. Every part of it brought pain and humiliation, of some sort or other; but, compared with the evil to Harriet, all was light; and she would gladly have submitted to feel yet more mistaken—more in error—more disgraced by mis-judgment, than she actually was, could the effects of her blunders have been confined to herself.

This is immensely supple, Austen marvelously extending what is sometimes called free indirect style, in which the author describes the heroine's thoughts with such sympathetic agitation that the heroine seems to be writing the novel. In free indirect style, though narration is still in the third person, the heroine seems to flood the narration, forcing it onto her side. ("It was a wretched business indeed! —Such an overthrow of everything she had been wishing for!") In her later novels, Austen tends to alternate free indirect style with a first-person stream-of-consciousness. *Mansfield Park* abounds in examples of the latter. Near the end of the book, Fanny, in Portsmouth, receives a letter from Edmund. She is sure that Edmund will marry Mary Crawford:

> As for the main subject of the letter—there was nothing in that to soothe irritation. She was almost vexed into displeasure, and anger, against Edmund. "There is no good in this delay," said she. "Why is not it settled?—He is blinded, and nothing will open his eyes, nothing can, after having had truths before him so long in vain.—He will marry her, and be poor and miserable. God grant that her influence do not make him cease to be respectable!"—She looked over the letter again. "'So very fond of me!' 'tis nonsense all. She loves nobody but herself and her brother. 'Her friends leading her astray for years!' She is quite as likely to have led them astray. . . . 'The only woman in the world, whom he could ever think of as a wife.' I firmly believe it ... Edmund, you do not know me. The families would never be connected, if you did not connect them. Oh! write, write. Finish it at once. Let there be an end of this suspense. Fix, commit, condemn yourself."

In this superb passage, quite characteristic of the later novels, Austen combines third person narration ("She looked over the letter again"), first-person soliloquy ("Edmund, you do not know me"), and scraps from Edmund's letter which are not quoted in first-person, but which Austen turns into free indirect style in order to hurry the effect of the passage, and to stamp on the reader the sense of Fanny's thought, of Fanny having taken and converted Edmund's words into her own. As the paragraph develops, so third-person narration falls away, and we entirely enter Fanny's mind. This kind of writing, moving rapidly between different modes, hurriedly capturing the very stammer of ratiocination, makes Austen a much more radical novelist than, say, Flaubert. Although Flaubert has a deeper, more "modern" commitment to a character's interiority than Austen, he never allows Emma Bovary quite such a broken self-conversation, such a failed and interrupted communication with the self. Unlike the smoothly controlling Flaubert, Austen wants to capture the *difficulty* of solitary thought, and in this her modernity lies.

This solitary thought is a kind of concealment in all of Austen's novels except in the free and open *Emma*. Austen's heroines withdraw, or wait until visitors have departed, or go on walks, in order to think. (The two enormous modern

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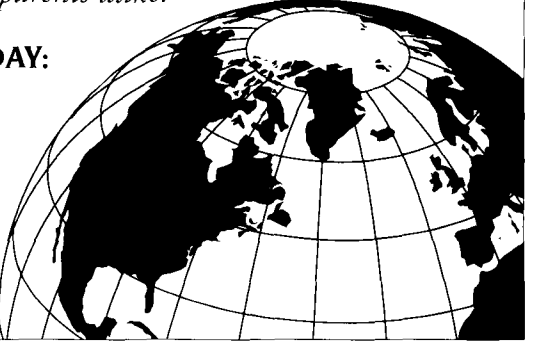

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changes that are found in Woolf and Joyce are that a character need go nowhere particular to think, and that thought need not have the gravity of emergency or agitation in order to earn its place, need not have an arrow-shower of exclamation marks to exist. Thought is as natural as narration, and has in fact become narration.) Austen's heroines are separate, different from everyone else in the novels by virtue of their ability to speak to themselves.

In *Mansfield Park*, Mary Crawford asks Edmund if the young Fanny is "out, or is she not?" Mary means presentable, or socially adult, and Edmund replies that his cousin is an adult, "but the outs and not outs are beyond me." Mary comments, reprovingly, that "it is much worse to have girls not out, give themselves the same airs and take the same liberties, as if they were...." Mary decides that Fanny is "not out," and seems obscurely irritated by the challenge that Fanny's being "not out" represents. Austen no doubt implies another kind of "out" or "in," the "out" of outwardness and the "in" of inwardness. We might think of Austen's heroines, despite their vivacity, as always "in," insofar as they are the only characters who hoard their thought, and who are seen to do so.

It is through inwardness that we get to know a character. Emma complains (to herself) that Jane Fairfax is "so cold, so cautious! There was no getting at her real opinion. Wrapt up in a cloak of politeness, she seemed suspiciously reserved." If Jane Fairfax seems reserved to us, as well as to Emma, it is because Austen never shows her speaking to herself. We feel we cannot "get at her real opinion," because we do not witness her thinking it. But we are always close to Emma's real opinion, even if it is the wrong one. In this sense, Emma's reality is what is most right about her. We delight in the rightness of her reality even when she is wrong.

When one says, then, that Austen's heroines are "in," it is not that they are like Jane Fairfax, who seems lost to herself; rather that they are real to themselves, and thus to us. And they are heroines because of this quality of being "in." Austen refers to Emma as being in "mental soliloquy," and while Austen's heroines are soliloquists, the obviously bad people in the novels are monologists, people who speak *at* others. Mr. Collins, Mrs. Norris, Miss Bates, Mrs. Elton (who "only wanted to be talking herself," writes Austen), all speak as if on stage, to an audience. Austen's heroines, by contrast, speak to themselves, like people in a novel. Her heroines belong to the novel; her villains belong to the stage.

Her heroines belong to the novel; and indeed, they act not only like readers, but like novelists, too. Like novelists, her heroines enable people to speak through them, they are arrangers and conduits of others' feelings. Anne Elliot in *Persuasion* (1818) dislikes that the Musgroves speak to each other through her, dislikes "being treated with too much confidence by all parties, and being too much in the secret complaints of each house." Like novelists, the heroines have to retreat to their study, to reflect, as it were, on their material, as if they were both writing and reading the material that the novel has presented them with. This is Anne Elliot's first instinct at the end of *Persuasion*, when she feels she might have won Captain Wentworth's love: "Anne went home to think over all that she had heard."

All of Austen's heroines retreat to a room of one's own, often prompted by the intimacy of a letter (which functions a little like the written contract that allows female subjectivity). Like novelists, her heroines have the capacity of memory, while the rest of the characters have only "pasts." It is the heroines who must learn about these pasts, who must inquire into the past. When they are gregarious, these heroines have the novelist's genius for negative capability, the capacity to find justice in the other side, to act a role. Emma catches herself doing this in an argument with Mr. Knightley: "to her great amusement, [she] perceived that she was taking the other side of the question from her real opinion, and making use of Mrs. Weston's arguments against herself."

Mansfield Park makes perhaps the strongest case for the power of the novel, and for the heroine's novelist-like powers. When the household at Mansfield Park decides to stage a play in the house (it is Kotzebue's *Das Kind der Liebe*, translated by Mrs. Inchbald as *Lovers' Vows*), Fanny Price objects to the impropriety, in particular to the prospect of the ladies of the house acting in compromising roles with the gentlemen of the house. Fanny's objection, which appears to be supported by Austen and by the thrust of the entire novel, seems priggish, and has occasioned much comment, because Austen and her family used happily to stage, as children, amateur dramatics. But Austen's objection might be that the play does not act like a novel. Recall that Fanny's first response to the idea is to withdraw with the text of the play and read it like a novel. Though Austen does not say so, there is a sense in which the play is improper because, by forcing people to act in highly charged emotional situations, it might precipitate actual emotional situations, off stage, that should remain latent. In other words, the stage artificially speeds up dilemmas and relationships. Things ought to go at a novel's pace (and *Mansfield Park* is a lengthy, spacious novel) and not at the pace of two melodramatic hours on stage. Though we don't know it yet, Fanny is right. The play, which intimately throws together Henry Crawford and Maria Bertram (who is already engaged to her foolish neighbor Rushworth), accelerates their flirtation: later in the book, Henry elopes with Maria, now married to the unfortunate Rushworth.

Austen's fiction is either celebrated or attacked for being conservative; but it is, of course, a strenuous argument on behalf of the deserving poor—deserving not because of gentility but because of goodness. Austen's ideal world, glimpsed in the puff of harmony that is exhaled at the end of her novels when the heroine gets her husband, would be an ethical meritocracy, in which the best dowry the heroine can bring to her match is her goodness. These best virtues are earned, not bestowed, and are internal. Recall Anne Elliot at the end of *Persuasion*. She knows that Captain Wentworth "must love her," and she goes around the room, looking at her father and sister and Lady Russell, and feels inclined "to pity every one, as being less happy than herself.... Her happiness was from within." Now Anne is in love, and is pitying those who are not, just as Levin does in *Anna Karenina* when he secures Kitty. But Austen's argument is stronger than that. Tolstoy describes Levin's happiness as a temporary advantage: he is in love, it is a gorgeous spasm of early love, it will pass. It is a sublime hallucination, really. But the whole of *Persuasion*—indeed, the whole of Austen's oeuvre—suggests that Anne will always be happier than those around her. Anne's horrible father and sister might, conceivably, fall in love, but Anne will still be happier than they will be. And why? Because her happiness is "from within" and the others do not exist "within." They are "out." She is a heroine.

It is consciousness that makes one happy. Consciousness is intelligence, and consciousness is inwardness. Even when the agitation of consciousness is not happy, it is always welcome, it is always good—and a good. Elizabeth Bennet likes to "indulge in all the delight of unpleasant recollections." I suspect that Jane Austen, so private, so enigmatic and contradictory, went through life as if she were the possessor of a clandestine happiness. Like her heroines, she saw things more clearly than other people and therefore pitied their cloudiness. •

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Disestablishment

By Robert Kagan

A Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency by William Bundy

(Hill and Wang, 647 pp., $35)

The historical fallacy that most pervades discussions of American foreign policy these days is that it was all so much simpler during the cold war. In contrast to today's strategic ambiguities, some imagine, American strategic imperatives during the cold war were clear and easily comprehended. In contrast to the partisan squabbling that characterizes foreign policy debates today, there was once a broad and unshakable consensus in the United States about what needed to be done to achieve those imperatives. You would think we all marched together under a single banner throughout the cold war.

This, of course, is nonsense. Early in the cold war, and again after 1968, the political battles over foreign policy were far more vicious than they are today. Still, it is useful nonsense. Voltaire once called history a pack of tricks that the present plays on the past, and while such historicism is often misapplied, in this case the misconstruction of the cold war has served some useful purposes. Above all, it has helped to cover the tracks of those who emphatically did not participate in the alleged "consensus," and who generally argued that the problem facing the United States was less the Soviet Union than certain Republican presidents. Today it seems that we were all cold warriors; but there was a time, not long ago, when the term was an indictment, an epithet to be hurled at those engaged in the hard business of confronting the Soviet Union by those recommending accommodation. There was a time, in short, when something called the liberal foreign policy establishment still existed.

To understand fully the origins and the purposes of William Bundy's new book, which is a lengthy assault on the foreign policies of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, it is necessary to recall the strange career of the liberal foreign policy establishment during the cold war. Bundy is the living embodiment of that establishment. He is among the last of a generation that influenced thinking about American foreign policy for much of the past fifty years.

A graduate of Groton, Yale, and Harvard Law School before joining a Washington law firm, Bundy joined the CIA in the early 1950s, then served as an assistant secretary of defense under Robert McNamara, and then as assistant secretary of state for East Asia in the last five years of the Johnson administration. The older brother of McGeorge Bundy and the son-in-law of Dean Acheson, Bundy counted among his powerful patrons McNamara and Allen Dulles. From 1972 to 1984, moreover, he was editor of *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations and in those years the Scripture of the liberal foreign policy establishment.

Bundy was emblematic of the establishment in more than pedigree. He also traversed the same ideological path over four decades that the establishment as a whole traveled. He began as a liberal anti-Communist in the Truman and Acheson mold. Like the rest of his comrades, he retained that staunch anti-Communist worldview right through Kennedy's introduction of thousands of American military advisers into Vietnam and the vast escalation of American involvement in the war under Johnson. Indeed, Bundy was among the principal architects of those policies in the Johnson years.

In his preface, Bundy modestly describes his government work as including "five-plus years in the State Department, devoted to policy in East Asia." This is falsely modest. As Kennedy's assistant secretary of defense and as Johnson's assistant secretary of state for East Asia, Bundy was one of a half-dozen or so of the most important shapers of American policy in Vietnam throughout the 1960s.

He was also on the hawkish side. As far back as 1961, he supported the commitment of combat forces to Vietnam, in what he described in an internal memorandum as an "early and hard-hitting operation" to boost the fortunes of the then-besieged Ngo Dinh Diem. In 1964, he recommended blockading Haiphong harbor as a first step in an escalating policy of pressure on North Vietnam that was to include bombing railways, roads, and industrial complexes.

Bundy led a team of officials who recommended what was then considered the middle-of-the-road option between withdrawal and a larger commitment of American troops. Their plan called for "graduated military moves" in Laos and in North Vietnam: this would express the resolve of the United States to friends and foes, but it would also leave the United States with enough flexibility "to escalate or not, and to quicken the pace or not." It was, in sum, the kind of incremental approach to the war that Johnson would pursue throughout the remainder of his term. The actions he proposed against the North, Bundy argued at the time, would "show all of Southeast Asia ... that we will take strong measures to prevent the spread of Communism specifically, and the grab of territory generally, in the area."

By 1964, according to the historian H.R. McMaster, Bundy had become one of a handful of civilians who took charge of the minutest details of American military planning in Vietnam. It was Bundy, as well as McNamara's aide John McNaughton, who "would determine the right 'mix' of military and diplomatic measures necessary to attain a settlement in Vietnam." And it was Bundy who "would then supervise military operations to 'tighten the screw' on North Vietnam's leaders." Bundy was also one of the principal drafters of what became known as the Tonkin Gulf resolution. In the same memorandum in which he recommended the military strikes against North Vietnam, Bundy acknowledged that such actions might "normally require" a declaration of war, but that to ask Congress for such a "blunt instrument" would cause an uproar—hence the idea of a congressional "resolution" which would give the president broad authority to act as he deemed necessary.

Over time, Bundy's enthusiasm for expanding the war seems to have dulled, as it became clear that North Vietnam was simply not responding to the "signals" that American military actions were designed to send. But he did not dissent from the broad thrust of Johnson's policy, even at the end. To put it another way, William Bundy was not George Ball. Ball, in fact, occasionally looked to Bundy for support in his efforts to turn Johnson around, believing that Bundy shared his misgivings. But as one historian of the Johnson years has written, based on interviews with

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Ball, "even when Bill Bundy sometimes sounded sympathetic ... he came down on the forceful side. And when Ball tried to bell him by asking for help on a peace plan, Bundy dodged." Bundy remained to the end a loyal and politically active supporter of Johnson.

Like the rest of the liberal foreign policy establishment, then, Bundy was himself a determined cold warrior throughout the 1950s and 1960s. He helped march the country headlong into the Vietnam War with eyes wide open, determined to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia as part of the broader strategy of containing the Soviet Union and maintaining America's position as preeminent leader of the free world. Circa 1965, you could count on the fingers of one hand the members of the establishment who took a different view of the stakes in Vietnam and of the policies necessary to defend American interests there. In that year, at a famous meeting of the "Wise Men," a group that included Dean Acheson and Clark Clifford, all agreed, according to Robert Dallek, that Johnson had "no choice but to expand the war to prevent a Communist victory that would jeopardize America's national security around the world."

In the last two years of the Johnson administration, however, the liberal foreign policy establishment began to crack. McNamara, Clifford, McGeorge Bundy, and even Acheson swung from ebullient optimism to dark pessimism about the possibility of concluding the war in a way that could preserve South Vietnam's independence. Many of these officials and advisers believed that Johnson was deceiving the nation about the prospects for a successful conclusion to the war because he did not want to appear to be "soft" on communism as he headed into the 1968 election year.

But their private anguish rarely surfaced in their public statements; and the fact that they were *de facto* abettors of Johnson's deception caused many of them to suffer a crisis of conscience, which was exacerbated by the harsh criticism they were experiencing from within their own elite segment of American society. As Stanley Karnow has written, "these bureaucrats would return home in the evening to face puzzled or even defiant wives and children.... [They] had college-age sons and daughters who attended 'teach-ins' or participated in anti-war demonstrations, and disputes now poisoned the dinner conversation." John McNaughton, a Harvard Law professor working for McNamara, who had shared both his boss's hard-line views and his mounting anxiety as the war dragged on inconclusively, worried that "a feeling is widely and strongly held" around the country that "'the Establishment' is out of its mind." And, indeed, during most of the last two years of Johnson's second term, the liberal establishment figures who remained in the Johnson administration were consumed by an ultimately futile effort to extricate themselves and the country from the maw of the monster that they had created.

As it happened, they were themselves extricated from the Vietnam disaster by the election of Richard Nixon. One can scarcely imagine what they would have done or thought about the war, or about American foreign policy generally, had Hubert Humphrey been elected in 1968. Judging by his track record, William Bundy might well have stayed on, with others, to continue along the same tortuous path followed by their Republican successors. But instead the liberal establishment was saved—saved, that is, from further responsibility for the conduct of the war in Vietnam, and, more broadly, from the conduct of the cold war they had once fought so zealously.

With the election of Nixon, the liberals were free to begin the arduous process of self-rehabilitation, free to salve their consciences, free to oppose the war they had started, free to renounce the vigorous anti-Communist worldview that had guided their actions for nearly three decades. In the 1970s and '80s, prominent figures of the liberal foreign policy establishment, such as Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy, made headlines with their dovish positions on such issues as the first use of nuclear weapons, the struggle against communism in the Third World, and détente with the Soviet Union.

William Bundy's transformation was a bit less radical. In his occasional articles in *Foreign Affairs*, Bundy tended toward moderate positions on the cold war, his style analytical rather than polemical. Still, his views on the conduct of the cold war were evolving. This was especially the case in the matter of Vietnam, where Bundy made a laborious effort to abandon his previous views without quite repudiating them. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1971, he argued that while it might have been right to believe that the United States had "vital" interests in Vietnam in 1965, when "the great-power forces within the area were seen in starkly bipolar terms," the intervening years had brought a change in Southeast Asia that lessened America's stake in the outcome. "What we care about," he wrote, "and should have always defined as our objective, can be simply stated as 'conditions for lasting peace' there.... This goal should be seen affirmatively and above all in terms of the aspirations of the 250 million people whose hopes and fears, however inarticulate and vague, define the true tides of the future." So much for showing "all of Southeast Asia ... that we will take strong measures to prevent the spread of Communism."

Like the rest of his liberal establishment comrades, though, Bundy was prepared to be more polemical when the subjects were Richard Nixon and his foreign policy. Both Nixon and Kissinger were ripe targets for the establishment's wrath after 1968. Nixon, a crass and conservative politician from California who had made his career denouncing the errors of establishment giants such as Dean Acheson, was certainly not one of them, a fact that the president seems to have resented acutely every day of his presidency. Bundy and others did not forget that Nixon had once called Acheson a professor in the "college of cowardly Communist containment." Bundy had himself been a target of Joseph McCarthy's scurrility, a victim of the kind of red-baiting which, Bundy once wrote bitterly in *Foreign Affairs*, had been "condoned (or more)" by Nixon and other leading Republicans.

That Nixon rose to power as a result of the liberal establishment's failure in Vietnam was especially galling for those sent into political exile in 1968. And the fact that Nixon and Kissinger soon fell into the very swamp in which their predecessors had been mired engendered predictable feelings of *schadenfreude*. But this was nothing compared to the joy of seeing Nixon immolate himself in the Watergate scandal. Nixon's fall was an unexpected, delicious pay-back for his conquest of the liberal establishment in 1968.

It was also more than that. Nixon's colossal failure as president had the effect of washing away memories of the liberal establishment's own colossal failures. It even provided a kind of backhanded vindication. The liberal establishment may have erred, even seriously erred, in Vietnam; but at least they were not crooks. History, they had reason to hope, would ultimately treat them more kindly than it would the discredited Nixon and Kissinger.

But history has a mind of its own, and a funny thing happened on the way to the end of the cold war. The liberal establishment's return to power in the late 1970s under Jimmy Carter proved almost as disastrous as its service under Lyndon Johnson. In the twelve years

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that followed Carter's ignominious defeat, Reagan and Bush and their administrations, populated by numerous former Nixon appointees and Kissinger aides, steered the country successfully through the conclusion of the cold war. And in the course of that Republican triumph, the reputations of Nixon and Kissinger were resurrected.

Nixon came to be viewed, across the political spectrum, as a wise old senior statesman. He may have been a crook, but he was a keen student of international relations. Even Bill Clinton paid Nixon such a tribute at his well-attended and much-celebrated funeral. Kissinger, meanwhile, did not merely transcend the liberal establishment: he transplanted it. By the end of the 1990s, Kissingerian realism became the dominant strain of thought in Washington think tanks and even at the Council on Foreign Relations. Bundy's own *Foreign Affairs* became the mouthpiece, not of the old liberal establishment, but of conservative realpolitik. Even President Clinton has adopted a Kissingerian view of the world, especially in Asia, where his policies have blended Carter's strategic vision with Nixon's moral vision, which is quite an achievement.

By the 1990s, in short, the once-powerful liberal foreign policy establishment was, for all practical purposes, defunct. One need not imagine the bitterness with which the few remaining scions of that faded dynasty greeted this cruel historical reversal. In *A Tangled Web*, Bundy has taken it upon himself to right this cosmic injustice, and to fire what may well be the liberal establishment's last salvo in this grand historical feud.

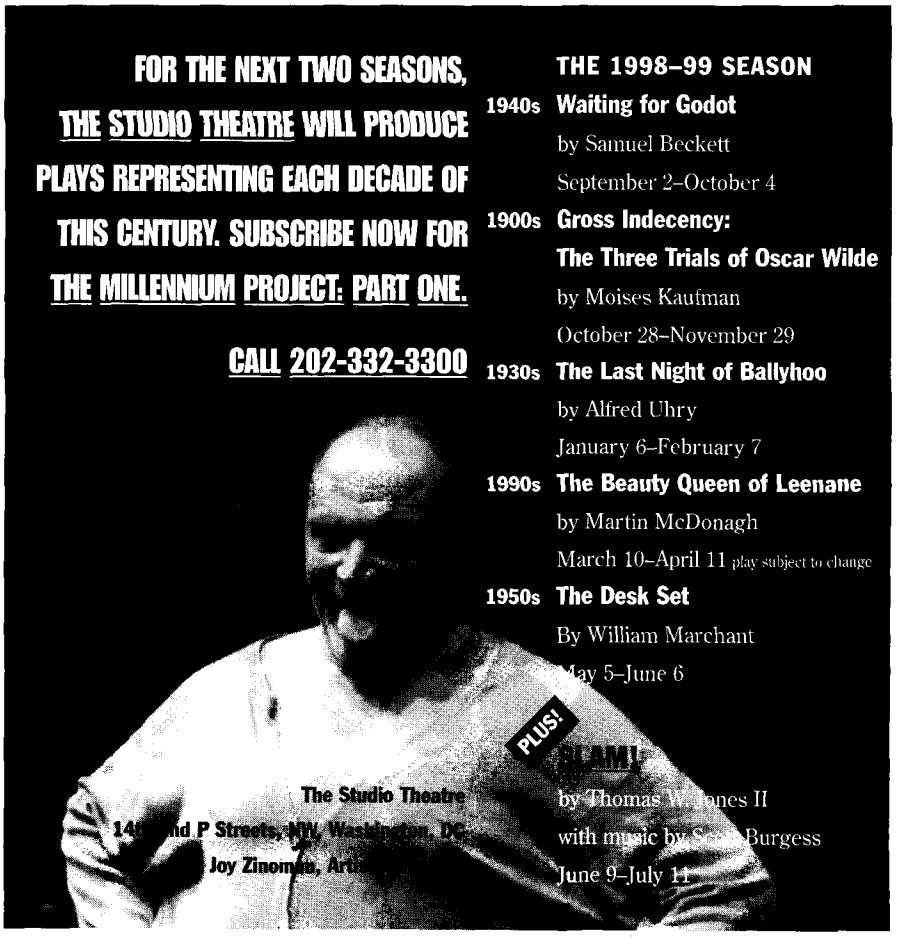
Bundy's is a carefully calibrated attack. In the face of the broad modern consensus about the wisdom and the skill with which Nixon and Kissinger handled foreign policy, it would have been a serious tactical error to write a condemnatory screed that too openly aimed at settling old scores. Instead, Bundy has affected to take the high road. He has written a serious, ostensibly nonpartisan history of the events and the people who shaped foreign policy in the Nixon years, parceling out praise and blame in what might seem to be equal measure, giving Nixon and Kissinger credit where credit is due, in the expectation that in those many, many instances where he condemns them he will, as a demonstrably dispassionate historian, be all the more persuasive.

Indeed, Bundy spends most of his book merely recounting the diplomatic history of the Nixon years in an entirely straightforward fashion—so straightforward, in fact, as to be unoriginal in both narrative and interpretation on many of the issues he covers. He relies almost exclusively on secondary sources, and on works that were considered standards in the field fifteen and twenty years ago. Bundy's work is in no respect, therefore, a "new" history of the Nixon years. It is the same old history, and even readers who consider themselves only reasonably well-informed about this period in history will learn little that they did not already know.

But that is not Bundy's concern. In his preface, Bundy acknowledges that he has aimed his book chiefly at a generation of readers who "were not then alive or old enough to follow foreign policy." And well he might. For these readers may be ignorant not only of the part played in history by Nixon and Kissinger, but also of the role that Bundy and the liberal establishment played in shaping the international and domestic contours of the era in which Nixon and Kissinger held power. Such readers may not even know that there are scores to settle, or that this old Kennedy and Johnson hand, for all his studied judiciousness, is out for revenge.

Bundy levels three broad criticisms of Nixon's and Kissinger's conduct of foreign policy, two of which are as unexceptionable as they are unoriginal. Nobody will be shocked to learn that Nixon and Kissinger made important foreign policy decisions with a keen eye to their domestic political consequences: Nixon's famous opening to China and his move toward détente with the Soviet Union, the two centerpieces of Nixonian foreign policy, were not undertaken merely for their own sake, Bundy shows, but were also, and perhaps even primarily, a way to keep liberal critics at bay while the administration tried to pursue its vision of an honorable settlement in Vietnam. Nixon wanted to get reelected, and this, Bundy points out, "strongly influenced the timing and sometimes the substance of his policies."

This is not exactly a major revelation. Nor does Bundy bother to ask whether such behavior distinguishes Nixon from most other presidents, including the one who now inhabits the White House. An uncharitable reader might ask whether Nixon was any worse than Johnson in this respect. For those who still doubt that this was the case, recent studies by Robert Dallek and H. R. McMaster have demonstrated that Johnson's policies in Vietnam, especially in the election years 1964 and 1968, were carefully and deliberately devised for their political impact at home, and much to the detriment of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the successful prosecution of that war. As McMaster writes, Johnson in 1964 "did not conceive of Vietnam as primarily a national security issue. Rather, he saw it mainly as the issue that could cost him the election."

Indeed, Bundy was himself no stranger to the commingling of politics and foreign policy. His proposals for escalating the war in 1964 called for attacks on North Vietnam to begin *after* election day. And during the campaign of 1964, Assistant Secretary of State Bundy drafted talking points for campaign speeches and explained how, in McMaster's words, Democratic speakers "might talk around the conflicting priorities of getting their president elected and preserving their freedom of action in Vietnam."

A similar point can be made about Bundy's second charge, that Nixon and Kissinger consistently resorted to deception of the public and of Congress in matters of foreign policy. They tried to hide actions they feared would be too controversial; they often gave one set of reasons for their actions in public while privately having in mind a different rationale; they covered up policy failures; they oversold successes. This is the "tangled web" of Bundy's title, derived from Walter Scott's famous couplet: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave/When first we practice to deceive!" According to Bundy, this pattern of deception led ultimately to the destruction not only of Nixon's presidency, but of the entire foreign policy structure that he and Kissinger tried to put into place. That "structure of peace," Bundy argues, was "oversold, timed and framed too much for domestic political effect."

No charge sticks more easily to the man who gave us Watergate than the charge of deception. And here, at least, there is no question that the magnitude of Nixon's deceptions was pretty spectacular. Still, if one attends only to the question of Nixon's deception in foreign policy, as Bundy asks us to do, it is not at all clear that Nixon's and Kissinger's deceptions were significantly greater or more egregious than those of many others who held their positions. Were they more egregious than Roosevelt's evasions of the Neutrality Act before World War II? Or, more to the point in Bundy's case, were they more egregious than the manifold deceptions of the Johnson administration in its conduct of the Vietnam War?

To illustrate his case against Nixon most starkly, Bundy opens his narrative with a meticulously detailed account of the "Chennault Affair," a sordid little tale about how the Nixon campaign, using Republican loyalist Anna Chennault as an intermediary, sounded out President Nguyen Van Thieu of Vietnam about the possibility of delaying entering peace talks on the eve of the 1968 election. According to Bundy, the story demonstrates that Nixon stole the election from Hubert Humphrey by means of a "covert operation" which was a "preview of techniques used at Watergate." We are to conclude, presumably, that the entire Nixon presidency, not just the last few years, lacked legitimacy, and that the liberal establishment's defeat in 1968 was a fluke. The "Chennault Affair" was the "October Surprise" of its day.

But Bundy's one-sided account of the "Chennault Affair" actually reveals both less and more than he intends. There does not seem to be any doubt that the Nixon campaign did pass messages to Thieu indicating that his refusal to join Johnson's proposed peace talks would be welcomed by Nixon. In the feverish last weeks of the campaign, the Johnson camp knew that the Nixon camp was engaged in some such skullduggery with Thieu. And they knew it because Johnson had ordered Chennault put under FBI surveillance and her phone tapped. Although they doubted whether Nixon himself was directly involved, officials in the White House and Humphrey's advisers nevertheless contemplated making their accusations against Nixon public in the last days of the campaign. The man who, on November 3, gave the Democratic candidate Humphrey the full briefing on what the FBI wiretaps had turned up was none other than the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, William Bundy. Humphrey decided not to raise the issue publicly, in no small part because he knew "it would have been difficult to explain how we knew about what [Chennault] had done." Difficult indeed.

The result was that reports of the "Chennault Affair" did not break until after the election, Humphrey lost, and Johnson officials have been nursing a grudge ever since. Whatever one may think about Nixon's role in the matter, however, Bundy's claim that it cost Humphrey the election is a hallucination brought on by three decades of fevered hatred. After all, as Bundy himself acknowledges, the Nixon campaign's message to Thieu was redundant. Thieu had no intention of going along with Johnson's peace proposal before the election. He believed it was a campaign ploy for American domestic consumption, and that the pressure on him to agree to talks with North Vietnam would probably diminish once the election was over.

He was right on both counts. Johnson himself later argued that Thieu became intransigent not as a result of Nixon's skullduggery, but because of a politically motivated speech delivered by Humphrey on September 30, in which the vice president promised to halt the bombing of the North and to "seek peace in every way possible." That speech, Johnson recalled in his memoirs, made Thieu "extremely nervous and distrustful of the Johnson-Humphrey administration and of the entire Democratic Party." It was no secret to Thieu that he would be better off with Nixon in the White House.

The fact is that both sides in the 1968 campaign were playing politics with the Vietnam War, just as both sides in the Vietnam War were trying to influence American domestic politics to improve their own positions on the battlefield. Bundy would have us believe that Johnson's ultimate decision to order a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam and the start of a peace offensive just days before the election had nothing to do with his passionate desire to defeat Nixon and to elect Humphrey, that it was merely a response to more positive signals coming from Hanoi in the waning weeks of the campaign. But those positive signals were aimed precisely and exclusively at boosting the fortunes of Humphrey, whom the North Vietnamese vastly preferred to Nixon, just as Thieu preferred Nixon to Humphrey. Thus Johnson's decision to call a halt to the bombing on October 31, 1968, and to launch a new round of peace talks, was an integral feature of a broad pro-Humphrey strategy in both Hanoi and Washington.

A great deal was at stake, after all, for Johnson, for Humphrey, and for the liberal foreign policy establishment as a whole. For Johnson and his advisers, salvaging their legacy was a primary concern, and the fate of Richard Nixon figured prominently in their calculations. For a time, Johnson toyed with the idea that a Nixon victory would be good for that legacy. As Dallek writes, "Johnson saw the up side of a Nixon victory as a Vietnam policy that would save him from the historical complaint that he was the only President to have lost a war." Yet Johnson's advisers "encouraged him to see Humphrey's election serving his historical reputation." A Nixon presidency, they argued, "would signal public eagerness for a change from Johnson and the Democrats. A vote for Nixon would express the belief that [Nixon] and the Republicans could do better coping with or even possibly resolving current difficulties over Vietnam" and other pressing matters. Johnson, who resented Humphrey's constant pressure

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for a more moderate Vietnam policy that would help his election bid, nevertheless "warmed to the idea of helping beat Nixon" because "a Humphrey victory would refute talk about a repudiation of Johnson." Are we supposed to believe that this calculation did not in any way affect the nature and the timing of Johnson's decisions?

The "Chennault Affair" is only a minor part of the story of Nixon's presidency, though Bundy gives it great prominence in his narrative. His account raises a broader question about his entire critique of Nixon and Kissinger, a question that Bundy would undoubtedly prefer not be asked. For even a charitable reader may wonder whether Bundy and the others who helped shape Johnson's military and domestic political strategy during the Vietnam War really have the standing to make the kinds of charges and criticisms that Bundy levels at Nixon and Kissinger.

This question seems especially pertinent when one turns to the third of Bundy's broad charges, his criticism of the substance of foreign policy during the Nixon presidency. For Bundy has a quibble with almost every strand of Nixon's and Kissinger's foreign policy, even on those matters where he feels compelled to give Nixon and Kissinger high marks, as he does for their Middle East diplomacy. He also remarks upon every instance in which a foreign policy success, such as the opening to China, did not deliver quite as much as promised.

Bundy harshly criticizes all errors of judgment and execution, even when those errors made no lasting impact on the course of events. Thus he condemns Nixon's embrace of the Shah of Iran, insisting that "the policies of the Nixon era bear a large share of the responsibility" for the "disastrous" and "deplorable" events of the late 1970s. In 1980, however, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* defending the Carter administration against the charge of having "lost" Iran, Bundy himself noted, correctly, that after "the late 1960s" American policy toward Iran had little if any effect on the decisions taken by the increasingly independent Shah. Even more appalling is Bundy's mechanical rehashing of the fight over whether the Nixon administration's bombing of Cambodia was responsible for the genocide later carried out by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Bundy's "reexamination" of the question of Nixon's culpability for the Cambodian genocide consists, by his own admission, almost entirely of restating, while slightly softening, the allegations made by William Shawcross and Seymour M. Hersh, as if those allegations were not the subject of serious scholarly controversy.

Bundy is disinclined to give Nixon and Kissinger the benefit of the doubt on such matters, and he consistently chooses the harshest interpretation of their successes and their failures. This is a pinched and niggardly book. It is a certainty that no administration's foreign policy could withstand this kind of scrutiny. Bundy, of all people, has reason to know that mistakes and failures are more common in foreign policy than successes. And even successes are never quite as complete and enduring as they are imagined to be. Bundy even has the nerve to point out that Kissinger's peace agreement in 1973 failed to save South Vietnam, as if he or anyone else in Johnson's administration believed by 1968 that there was a viable policy for accomplishing that objective.

But it is in his attack on the broad outlines of Nixon's and Kissinger's foreign policy strategy that Bundy most clearly reveals the weakness of the liberal establishment's case against them. For it is not merely that Bundy, with his own history, lacks the standing to make the criticism that he makes. It is also that the criticism itself is wrong, and says more about the accuser than the accused.

Put simply, in Bundy's reckoning Nixon and Kissinger stand accused, above all, of prosecuting the cold war. For all their talk of détente, they remained anti-Communists at heart. Nixon was "the archetype, perhaps even the caricature, of the cold warrior." He and Kissinger saw the United States as locked in an eternal competition with the Soviet Union, and this shaped their policies not only toward Moscow but toward the rest of the world, too. They "envisaged a continuing arms race and also intense competition with the Soviet Union in the Third World." The world for them was a giant superpower battleground, where "losses" had to be prevented and "gains" had to be sought wherever possible.

To substantiate his charge that Nixon and Kissinger actually persisted in believing that there was a cold war, Bundy turns to the "dispassionate judgment" of Anatoly Dobrynin, who observes in his autobiography that Nixon's and Kissinger's policy toward the Soviet Union was unfortunately "a combination of deterrence and cooperation.... [T]hey were not really thinking in terms of bringing about a major breakthrough in Soviet-American relations, and of ending the Cold War and the arms race." This was their chief failure, in Bundy's view, and it was the cause of many smaller failures,

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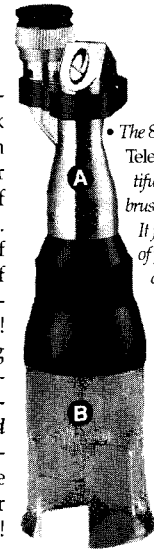

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including the embrace of the Shah, the attempt to undermine Salvador Allende in Chile, and the coolness with which they viewed the *Ostpolitik* of Willy Brandt.

After his Vietnam experience, Bundy reeducated himself to believe that emerging "regional" issues were more important than superpower rivalry, and that the former needed to be handled outside the context of the latter. Nixon and Kissinger failed to put themselves through the same reeducation, and therein lies their dishonor. "Presiding over a time when the United States should have been moving out of the mold of the Cold War and into the era when local and regional crises were more important than superpower rivalry, and economic factors more influential than geopolitics at any level," Bundy charges, Nixon "never made the leaps that history called for, on either front."

Even on those matters about which Bundy believes Nixon and Kissinger acted correctly, such as their policy toward China, they did so for the wrong reason—that is, they were driven by anti-Soviet motives. The problem with Nixon's and Kissinger's "triangle" diplomacy, Bundy argues, was that it was "unbalanced." "It was based not on equal treatment of the Communist powers but on a pronounced favoring of China." Nixon and Kissinger applied a "double standard" when dealing with two powers. But that was the point, wasn't it? Kissinger always believed, as he wrote to Nixon after departing from his first big meeting with the Chinese, that "the beneficial impact on the USSR is perhaps the single biggest plus that we get from the China initiative." Bundy seems to think that the opening to China was worthwhile for its own sake, something that Kissinger himself did not believe at the time. (Kissinger has since developed a Sinocentric view of American foreign policy.)

For Bundy, Kissinger's "unbalanced" attitude is only further proof that Nixon and Kissinger were not really wedded to détente, that their accommodation of the Soviet Union was only a tactical move aimed at shoring up flagging domestic support for continued American engagement in the world in the midst of the Vietnam debacle. Bundy even accuses Nixon of being an anti-Communist hawk; and for a figure such as Bundy, those words amount to a kind of final condemnation. Thus, although he applauds Nixon for consistently fighting against efforts by Senator Henry Jackson to undermine détente and arms control talks, Bundy suspects that "a large piece of him agreed with what Jackson and his ally, James Schlesinger, were advocating." Would that this were true.

Thanks to Nixon's ambivalence, combined with his overall tendency to deceive the public and to seek short-term political gain in all he undertook, détente "foundered in the end, for lack of political support at home." Détente, Bundy argues, like the rest of Nixon's and Kissinger's foreign policy, became caught in the "tangled web" of Nixon's deception. It failed not because of Watergate, as Kissinger claims. It failed because it was designed to fail.

This is almost conspiratorial. It will come as news to many of Nixon's critics, moreover, that the real problem with détente was Nixon's and Kissinger's lukewarmness toward it, their failure to pursue it ardently and sincerely. Those unafflicted by Bundy's need for conscience-salving would advance an entirely different criticism. For the problem with Nixon was not that he was too hard on the Soviets, the problem was that he was too soft. In trying to compensate for American weakness brought on by the failure in Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger succeeded only in making the United States even weaker. Their real deception was not in pursuing détente half-heartedly, but in trying to convince the American people that Brezhnev's Soviet Union was a partner in international affairs rather than an adversary. The events of the mid- and late 1970s, in which the Soviets continued a massive conventional and nuclear arms buildup and showed a newly adventurous spirit in the Third World, rather convincingly disproved the main tenets of the détente strategy.

Or to put it differently, Richard Nixon was not Ronald Reagan. Indeed, Nixon and Kissinger hewed far too closely to the line advocated by the post-Vietnam liberal establishment. They withdrew from Vietnam and permitted a Communist victory there; they pursued détente, though it went largely unreciprocated by Moscow; they established an arms control process with a most untrustworthy Soviet Union bent on strategic superiority; they eschewed anti-Communist rhetoric and de-ideologized American foreign policy, a kind of moral disarmament; they resisted efforts to link American trade with Soviet human rights practices. The evidence reveals that, in his domestic policies as well as in his foreign policies, Nixon constantly sought ways to ingratiate himself with a liberal foreign policy establishment that refused to grant him the legitimacy in American elite circles that he craved. And the result was a decline in the fortunes of the United States that was not reversed until the election of Reagan.

In the aftermath of the cold war, these criticisms still seem fair. Even Kissinger acknowledges now that it was not détente but "diplomatic confrontation, economic ostracism and ideological warfare ... [that] accelerated the collapse of the Soviet empire." It was the intransigent idealism of Reagan, not Kissingerian realpolitik, and much less the accommodationism of the liberal establishment, that won the cold war. If one wanted to criticize Nixon's and Kissinger's foreign policies, this would seem to be the strongest angle of attack; but even those who have leveled this very different kind of criticism tend to be more charitable in their assessment of Nixon's and Kissinger's failures than Bundy. For they acknowledge what Bundy covers over: the horrible predicament that Nixon and Kissinger inherited from their predecessors.

The truth is that just about every major aspect of the foreign policy that Nixon and Kissinger tried to conduct from 1969 to 1974—from the opening to China to détente with the Soviet Union to the bombing of Cambodia to the rigid anti-Communism of their policies in such Third World venues as Chile and Indonesia—had its origins in their desperate efforts to extricate themselves and the nation from the disastrous Vietnam policy that they inherited from the liberals who preceded them, and to do so with the least damage to America's standing in the world. Thanks to the Johnson administration's failure in Vietnam, not just Soviet leaders but leaders of both friendly and hostile governments around the world had reason to believe that the correlation of forces was shifting against the United States. And thanks to the liberal establishment's crack-up over Vietnam, the hard realities of American domestic politics made it all but impossible to take the actions necessary to dispel that impression.

To prosecute the cold war effectively, Nixon and Kissinger had either to fight the liberal establishment, to evade it, or to meet it half-way. They did too much of the second and the third, and too little of the first, and this is to be regretted. Still, it would have taken extraordinary courage to do what was necessary to avoid the disastrous policy failures of the mid- and late 1970s. The "tangled web" in which Nixon and Kissinger were caught was not primarily of their own weaving. The establishment of which William Bundy was a member must bear the lion's share of the blame, something that it has spent more than twenty years refusing to do.

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The Anti-American Revolution

By Richard Wolin

Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought by James W. Ceaser

(Yale University Press, 292 pp., $30)

I.

Images of America have always haunted the European psyche. For European intellectuals, America has often assumed the form of a nightmare vision, a degenerate image of Europe's own future. Consider Cornelius de Pauw, the eighteenth-century French naturalist and the author of a three-volume treatise called *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains.*

De Pauw was convinced of the inferiority of American coffee beans, which no self-respecting European would deign to drink; and of the shortcomings of American sugar, which was grossly deficient in sweetness; and of the manifest inadequacy of American wine, which derived from shriveled, insect-infested grapes. And the genetic deficiencies of life in the New World were not confined to its flora. There was the inferiority of the fauna, too. According to de Pauw, the animal species of the New World are "for the most part inelegantly shaped and ... badly deformed." Many lack tails; others suffer from a disproportion between the number of digits on their front and back feet. Conversely, for vermin of all varieties, America is a kind of paradise: "The surface of the earth, covered with rot, is inundated by lizards, by snakes, and by reptiles and insects monstrous in their size and in the strength of their poison." Only in such a godforsaken land might one find—as de Pauw reports—frogs that "weigh up to thirty-seven pounds and bellow like [European] calves."

So all-encompassing is the decrepitude of the American environment that animals of European origin cease to grow: "Their size diminished, they lose a part of their instinct and capacity." Dogs mysteriously forget how to bark. European women are prone to become infertile. And it is no surprise that the New World's human inhabitants fare little better in de Pauw's account. The Indians, for example: "Even today, after three hundred years (since the Europeans arrived), not one of them can think." Is it any wonder that "in all of America, from Cape Horn to the Hudson Bay, there has never appeared a philosopher, a scholar, an artist, or a thinker whose name merits being included in the history of science or who has served humanity"?

As James W. Ceaser demonstrates in his provocative book, it would be a serious error to dismiss de Pauw's characterizations as the nocturnal musings of an intellectual crank. De Pauw's book was widely viewed as the most authoritative discussion of America of its day. It was rapidly translated into German and Dutch. It won its author a position of influence at the court of Frederick the Great (as it might do today in some European capitals). In *The Federalist,* Alexander Hamilton took pains to refute de Pauw's "degeneration thesis," or the view, in Hamilton's words, that "all animals, and with them the human species, degenerate in America—that even dogs cease to bark after having breathed awhile our atmosphere."

For the authors of *The Federalist,* the stakes were much greater than the honor of American crops and American pets. De Pauw's onslaught went to the heart of the new undertaking in democratic government. For if natural history and biology were all-determining, then free will was inconsequential; and if free will was inconsequential, then the American experiment in political liberty was doomed to fail.

In opposition to the reigning European view, which was profoundly shaped by taxonomists such as de Pauw and Buffon, "Publius" insisted that it was not climate and heredity that were decisive for the formation of human societies, but the consciously willed elements of law, morality, and government. The peculiar virtue of human societies lay not with those aspects that have been prescribed by nature. Instead, humanity's uniqueness—and certainly its capacity for political distinction—was owed to its ability to transcend what is naturally given, to shape life according to the designs of higher human ends.

Against the biological determinism of de Pauw and his supporters, "Publius" argued that humankind is distinct from other forms of life insofar as it possesses the capacity to form politics on the basis of "reflection and choice." What was at stake in this dispute between natural historians and political theorists was the viability of democratic politics. And there were what we would call policy implications. De Pauw, who believed that heredity and environment were destiny, and that it was imperative that the laws of natural science be applied to human affairs, became a leading spokesman for European isolationism. It was a "logical" conclusion were Europeans to avoid succumbing to New World degeneracy. Moreover, colonization raised the specter of miscegenation, the mixing of two peoples who were essentially unlike one another.

Needless to say, arguments such as de Pauw's that questioned the basic humanity of Native Americans made it all the easier to justify their ill-treatment. Such rough-hewn racial taxonomies were precursors to full-blown, nineteenth-century European biological racism. In many respects, indeed, modern racism was merely an extension of the eighteenth-century doctrine of "polygenesis": the view that there existed essential and unbridgeable differences among the various human races.

Reconstructing America is a book with many virtues. For a start, it is a fascinating compendium of misconceptions about America, a catalog of expressions of European anxiety and paranoia that may be followed down to the historical present. And the hysteria is not all in the distant past. In the recent French debate over Euro Disney, for example, Jean Cau, who was Jean-Paul Sartre's personal secretary, described the American theme park as a "cultural Chernobyl ... a construction of hardened chewing gum and idiotic folklore written for obese Americans." The Socialist Party spokesman Max Gallo lamented the fact that this "Trojan Mouse" would "bombard France with uprooted creations that are to culture what fast food is to gastronomy." You would have thought that the Americans were attempting to install medium-range nuclear missiles.

Ceaser's knowledge of European political traditions is prodigious, and he puts it to excellent use. For the most part he is interested in tracing the idea of America as *Schreckbild,* or an image of horror, as a staple of modern European political thought. Progressives tended to be seduced by American promises of

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Rain

The rain, the incessant drench,
the lap of it puddling up,
seen through spattered window-glass.
And all of us in that long house together
where all the talk was of the weather,
house-partying on a rainy weekend.

Fragrance of toast, incessant cups of tea.
The wind mulled and hovered,
the wind set all the buttercups in the field a-tremble.
I would sit all morning in the blue armchair transfixed,
hearing the whoosh and settle of wind and rain
surround and define
the shape of the cottage.

The rain was sleep till half-past ten,
the rain was not having to shave,
the rain was opium,
the rain was an ocean voyage through blackness.
The rain was a whisper under coverlets,
a barely moving lace between us and the trees.
The rain was constant, sempiternal, older than woodsmoke.

And then it would bow its head and subside,
and a blackbird
tuning cleanly pinnacles of delight from a dry perch
under dripping boughs
would put you in mind
of Noah and his lot
drifting becalmed when the waters retreated.

I wanted it never to end.
I wanted to deconstitute and emanate out
beyond the force-field of the cottage
like lamplight through wet windows,
and let the rain possess me entirely—
let it soak right down
into the pores of my happiness.

RICHARD TILLINGHAST

equal opportunity and democratic inclusion, but leading apostles of European reaction—Joseph de Maistre, Arthur de Gobineau, Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger—viewed the American Revolution as a political sibling of the French Revolution; that is, as an extreme manifestation of political modernity, the rights of man, liberalism, equality. All of this Americanization had to be crushed, preferably by the purgative methods of counterrevolutionary violence.

Yet Ceaser's focus is not merely historical. Like all good histories, his is motivated by an impassioned concern for our precarious present. Ceaser is rightly perturbed by the anti-intellectual mood so pervasive in contemporary university life—a mood best expressed in the fashionable view that reason and the Enlightenment were not a blessing but a curse. According to the reigning cant, reason is essentially a form of repression, whose *raison d'être*, as it were, is the denial of "difference." Reason reduces the "other" to the "same"; it oppresses us with "coherence." The new politics of difference is relativist, according to which all differences or standpoints should be treated equally. But only up to a point: there is one standpoint that is not deserving of equal treatment, and it is "Eurocentrism," the culture that gave us reason and colonialism.

Ceaser is rightly troubled by such tendencies, with their glib irrationalism and their thoughtless defamations of political liberalism as a sinister plot to level differences by means of "tolerance" and "equality before the law." Such claims are especially rife, he contends, in the academic discourse of American Studies, where America-bashing has been raised to an art. What, then, is the connection between the "politics of difference" and the idea of America as a degeneracy that has haunted European thought for nearly two centuries? In pondering this question, Ceaser has discovered an answer that is profound. It is that images of America that were once the exclusive province of the European Right have been taken over and celebrated by the American Left. The subterranean and largely unnoted affinities between these otherwise antithetical traditions are the threads that unite this deft and penetrating study.

II.

Today the doctrines of Joseph de Maistre and Arthur de Gobineau are seldom studied. Yet Maistre and Gobineau, along with Maistre's contemporary and fellow aristocrat Louis de Bonald, were the most gifted exponents of counterrevolutionary ideology in modern Europe. If one seeks the main lines of the right-wing critique of democracy—a tradition that would culminate directly in the visceral antiliberalism of European fascism—their writings are indispensable.

It was the French Revolution that roused Maistre from the tranquil life of a provincial aristocrat. In 1792, the Revolutionary armies invaded his native Savoy, forcing him into exile. Five years later he published his famous treatise *Considerations on France*, one of the great studies of the Revolution in its time. Like the Revolution's supporters on the political Left, Maistre was impressed by the sublimity of the political drama that was unfolding before his eyes. For this reason, he was convinced that no mere historical attempt to understand the events could do them justice. The Revolution's scale, its apocalyptic magnitude, was a sign of the hand of Providence. Maistre concluded that only a theological understanding of the events could capture their meaning.

Thus was born Maistre's thesis that the Revolution was an act of divine vengeance upon France for the apostasies of the Enlightenment. In his view, the revolution was heaven's retribution for France's sacrilegious flirtation with "enlightened" ideas—its wanton indulgence in atheism and materialism, culminating in the sin of regicide. The revolutionaries, trusting in the forces of progress and reason, flattered themselves that they were in control of the historical events that they had unleashed; but Maistre knew better. As he famously remarked, "it is not men who lead the Revolution, it is the Revolution that leads men." Only in this way could one explain the unprecedented levels of

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misery and chaos that revolutionary France had been forced to endure.

By interpreting the revolutionary events as essentially a grandiose theological pageant, Maistre sought to underline the futility of all human efforts to endow history with meaning. By mocking the revolutionaries, he wished to strike a death blow against the faith in reason that had inspired them. Like Burke, he was convinced of the folly of trying to model human society according to the dictates of the human mind. A devout Catholic, a believer in original sin, Maistre held man to be an essentially foolish and wicked creature. Autocratic rule and fear of damnation were the only forces capable of saving humanity from the folly of its own schemes.

As Ceaser points out, the conviction that humanity is incapable of rationally shaping its own destiny, and that brute, irrational forces are the ultimate determinants of human affairs, is a position shared by the apostles of European reaction and contemporary postmodernism. Like his contemporary Bonald, and like today's postmodernists, Maistre believed it was imperative that the course of the Enlightenment be reversed. In a famous remark, he declared that authority of evidence must be replaced by the evidence of authority. (Here he parts company with the postmodernists, who are enemies of authority.) Whereas the *philosophes* proclaimed a new faith in reason, Maistre was of the opinion that "what we ought not to know is more important than what we ought to know."

Excessive faith in the powers of rational inquiry would erode the foundations of order and authority. Political sovereignty could never be rationally justified, let alone made the object of a social contract. Instead, it was a matter of unthinking obedience. Unsurprisingly, Maistre was quick to dismiss the prospects of the American Revolution. Give it enough time, he argued, and it would succumb to the same debilities as the French. The American Constitution was a consummate expression of the hubris and ineptitude of human reason: "All that is truly new in their constitution, all that results from common deliberation, is the most fragile thing in the world; one could not bring together more symptoms of weakness or decay."

In *Considerations on France,* Maistre gave voice to a sentiment that would in the future have tremendous resonance among reactionaries of all stripes. "There is no such thing in the world as man," declares Maistre. "In my life I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians, and so on. I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, that one can be Persian. But as for man, I declare I've never encountered him. If he exists, I don't know about it." In this way, Maistre sought to mock the universalism of the Enlightenment. His words expressed not merely an uncontroversial empirical observation about the relationship between ethnicity and identity, about the particularity of human attachments; they wished also to demonstrate that "man in the abstract" was a chimera, a febrile and dangerous concoction of philosophical speculation.

His remark also is a forceful statement about the unbridgeable nature of ethnic differences, the incommensurability of identities, in the face of which Enlightenment shibboleths about the "rights of man" seem ingenuous. Maistre's claims concerning the irreducibility of difference would form the starting point for Gobineau's criticism of the revolutionary heritage and European liberalism in general. And from this notion of incommensurability it was not a long way to racism, which would become a foundation of counterrevolutionary ideology.

Maistre's theory of the indelibility of "difference," and his scathing dismissal of natural right and the "rights of man," cast him in an unexpected new light. It reveals him to have been an important progenitor of the "politics of difference." He may have been many things: Catholic, legitimist, essayist, and polemicist. Ideologically speaking, however, Maistre was one of the first hardcore multiculturalists.

III.

Born in 1816, Gobineau was a French aristocrat appalled by the political legacy of the French Revolution. The democratic radicalism unleashed by the revolutions of 1848 convinced him that European civilization had reached a point of no return, that its collapse was a question of time. And so, in the aftermath of the tumultuous events of 1848, Gobineau set out to systematize his views on the forces responsible for Europe's political decline. The result was his mammoth *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races,* which appeared in four volumes between 1853 and 1855.

Despite the distasteful character of his views, Gobineau was unquestionably a figure of substance. In addition to the *Essay,* he was a talented novelist, and he had a distinguished career in the French diplomatic corps. When Tocqueville became France's foreign minister in 1849, he selected the young count, his junior by eleven years, to serve as his personal secretary. In the mid-1830s the two had begun a lively correspondence that culminated in a contentious debate on the political implications of Gobineau's *Essay.* Tocqueville was the quintessential European liberal, Gobineau the quintessential European reactionary. Their landmark exchange about Europe's future—astutely analyzed by Ceaser—eerily foreshadowed a century of ideological turmoil.

Both Maistre and Bonald had proffered influential indictments of political liberalism; but by the middle of the nineteenth century, their lines of attack—theological in the case of Maistre, traditionalist in the case of Bonald—seemed antiquated. The nineteenth century was an age of scientism. Political convictions had to legitimate themselves before this new tribunal. Gobineau's ingenious idea was to reestablish counterrevolutionary doctrine on "scientific" foundations. He did this by employing the concept of race as a universal key to historical development. Racially based taxonomies of human types were already in use among anthropologists and natural historians, but Gobineau was the first to apply race systematically to the study of history as a type of hidden master-code. In this way, he became the first outstanding prophet of European decline.

According to Gobineau, the outcome of European history was genetically predetermined. Though he had no doubts

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about the ultimate superiority of European civilization, he was convinced that Europe's glory days lay in the distant past. The tragedy of European development was owed to the fact that, whereas its racial preeminence made conquest of inferior peoples inevitable, a mixing of the races was unavoidable, resulting in the dilution of Europe's gene pool. And the laws of genetic development were iron-clad. They admitted no exceptions. When noble races bred with inferior stock, the superior group suffered biological depletion. As he observed in the *Essay*, "a people will die definitively, and its civilization with it, the moment when its original ethnical element has become so subdivided or submerged by admixtures of foreign races that it can no longer give rise to sufficient impulse."

It would be difficult to overestimate Gobineau's influence on the course of European political thought. In his correspondence with Tocqueville, Gobineau expressed the fear that his *Essay* was fated to be ignored in his native France. Perhaps so, the author of *Democracy in America* responded; and with uncanny prescience he went on to prophesy precisely where Gobineau's doctrine of Aryan supremacy was destined to find great favor: across the Rhine in Germany.

Gobineau was a friend of Wagner and the primary source of the German composer's racism. In 1900, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Wagner's son-in-law, published *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, the ur-text of Nazi racial theory. Chamberlain's elaborate arguments for Aryan superiority have a distinctly Gobineauian provenance. Gobineau was lionized by the Nazis, who employed the *Essay* as a catechism for racial instruction. As Ceaser reports, Hitler's one reservation concerned Gobineau's proto-Spenglerian thesis about the inevitability of racial decline. "How can we arrest racial decay? Must what Count Gobineau says come true?" asked the Führer in 1933.

And Gobineau's views of America? Ceaser shows that they fluctuated. At first, he viewed America as a potential Aryan haven from European cultural decline; but as he became more familiar with American politics and customs, he arrived at the diametrically opposite view. The degeneracy of life in the New World, Gobineau argued, far outstripped the degeneracy of Europe. For it was in America that the ills of democratic political culture—natural rights, social leveling, majority rule—were most advanced. American society was resolutely progressive and meritocratic. And such values were impossible to reconcile with the principles of aristocracy, where men and women were judged on the basis of who they were rather than on the basis of what they did.

As of the 1850s, moreover, a new wave of "non-Aryan" immigrants—Irish, Italians, and Germans of dubious racial patrimony—began flooding America's ports. In Gobineau's eyes, these new settlers were "scum." The prospects for a racially pure sanctuary had been irretrievably squandered. As Ceaser indicates, Gobineau's view of the New World as a morass of racial impurity and "mongrelization" would henceforth become standard among intellectuals on the European Right. For Spengler, writing in the mid-1930s, American cultural decay was a direct result of lax immigration policies, which had brought about a depletion of the nation's Aryan core.

Gobineau was an aristocratic racist. Entire nations could never be ethnically pure, only a racial elite. Like de Pauw, he was a harsh critic of European colonialism. The subjugation of inferior peoples would only encourage interbreeding, and thereby accelerate the course of Europe's debasement. He disapproved of American slavery on similar grounds. Still, anti-abolitionists in America viewed the *Essay* as an eloquent justification of their cause, and busily set about translating and distributing excerpts that suited them. Hitler, for one, fully sympathized with their perspective. He viewed the Confederacy as the lost "embryo of a future truly great America."

As Ceaser notes, one of the most seductive aspects of Gobineau's position was his historical determinism. It proved a powerful ideological weapon to counter the Enlightenment view that human history could be consciously willed and controlled. In the nineteenth century, social-scientific rationalism was filled with optimistic prognoses concerning mankind's future once the forces of superstition and unreason had been vanquished. With his theory of biological determinism, Gobineau tried to show that the utopian dreams of the rising middle classes were essentially unrealizable.

IV.

In France, counterrevolutionary doctrine found favor among the Action Française, the militant "leagues," the anti-Dreyfusards, and the supporters of Vichy; but the republican traditions of French politics and culture usually managed to keep the forces of reaction at bay. Germany, as Tocqueville understood, was another matter. In Germany, liberal political traditions remained marginalized; and when national unity arrived in 1871, it was autocratically orchestrated from above by Bismarck, instead of being accomplished democratically from below.

It is the momentous migration of counterrevolutionary ideas across the Rhine that Ceaser takes up next in his fascinating study. As Fritz Stern has observed, "from the 1870s on, conservative writers in imperial Germany expressed the fear that the German soul would be destroyed by 'Americanization,' that is by mammonism, materialism, mechanization and mass society." A latecomer to modernity, the breathtaking pace of German industrialization produced shock waves of anxiety among traditional German elites: Junker aristocrats, mandarin intellectuals, and the rural inhabitants who were forced to migrate to the cities for work. A phobic preoccupation with the evils of modern industrial society became a hallmark of German social thought from the 1880s onward. More often than not, such fears were projected upon America.

It has lately become unfashionable, especially among postmodernists, to read Nietzsche as a political thinker. In this way, one dodges Nietzsche's long discussions of "breeding," "hierarchy," "race," and martial glory. If one wants to understand the radicalization of Germany's right-wing intellectuals, however, an appreciation of Nietzsche's influence as a political thinker is indispensable. This point is not lost on Ceaser, and in his account of German images of America, Nietzsche plays a central role. The prejudices that existed among French prophets of counterrevolution found new energy in Nietzsche.

According to Nietzsche, "the breathless haste with which [Americans] work—the distinctive vice of the new world—is already beginning ferociously to infect old Europe and is spreading a spiritual emptiness over the continent." In America, he observed, "one thinks with a watch in one's hand." Americans have redefined the meaning of virtue: "Virtuousness now consists in doing something in less time than someone else." And American attitudes were manifesting themselves elsewhere. "The faith of the Americans today," Nietzsche asserted, "is more and more becoming the faith of the Europeans as well." If the modern age could be described as one of total "nihilism," whose defining feature was the replacement of aristocratic values by the timorous, egalitarian mores of mass society, then America was the homeland of nihilism.

It would be hard to imagine a more mistaken notion than this one; but Nietzsche never set foot on American soil, and his ignorance proved no obstacle

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to his confidence. Wrenched from their original context, such Nietzschean sentiments would inspire the worldview of Germany's "conservative revolutionary" thinkers, most of whom came of age during the interwar years. For this influential group of protofascist intellectuals—Ernst Jünger, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Carl Schmitt, and Oswald Spengler, several of whom would make their peace with the Nazi Party during the 1930s—"Americanization" symbolized a fate of racial debasement and cultural degeneracy.

Spengler was perhaps the best known among this group, but it was Moeller van den Bruck who first popularized the idea of "the Third Reich," in a book of that name in 1923. For van den Bruck, America was a one-dimensional society: "In America everything is a block, pragmatism, and the national Taylor System." In his view, the history of liberalism had obviously ended in failure. America's only hope was to shed the trammels of constitutional government in order to exploit to the hilt her industrial prowess and pioneer spirit.

Yet it was in Spengler's writings, as Ceaser shows, that the German preoccupation with technology was promoted into a major philosophical obsession. His hugely influential *Decline of the West* (1918, 1923) was significantly influenced by Gobineau's thesis of the inevitability of European decline, and it corresponded perfectly to Germany's postwar mood of despair and disorientation. And then, in 1931, Spengler published the equally influential *Man and Technology*, in which he viewed the entirety of human history from the standpoint of man's struggle with the forces of "mechanization"—a confrontation that man was fated to lose.

Inevitably, argued Spengler, the Faustian spirit of modern man was destined to recoil upon and consume its creator. "Civilization itself has become a machine that does, or tries to do, everything in mechanical fashion. We think only in horse-power now; we cannot look at a waterfall without mentally turning it into electric power; we cannot survey a countryside full of pasturing cattle without thinking of its exploitation as a source of meat-supply." Ceaser shrewdly intimates that Spengler's apocalyptic rhetoric is reminiscent of contemporary environmentalist extremism: "In a few decades most of the great forests will have gone, to be turned into news-print, and climatic changes have been thereby set afoot which imperil the land-economy of whole populations. Innumerable animal species have been extinguished.... Whole races of humanity have been

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What are the facts?

Islam's hatred against the West. We Americans are reluctant to criticize or even to discuss the religions of others. We consider it a personal matter. But the hatred of the Moslem-Arab world against the West, especially against the United States (the "Great Satan") and Israel (the "Little Satan"), can only be explained by comprehending the psychology and the principal religious tenets of Islam. Islam is a world-wide religion, but it originated in Arabia and it survives in Arabia in its purest and most virulent form. The policies of the Arab countries are dominated by Islam. Islam believes itself to be in possession of the holy truth, in the name of which any act of violence is permitted and encouraged. It is only with that understanding that the "strategic decisions" of Saddam Hussein, even with his armed forces at the edge of destruction, can be explained.

"The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of still most Moslem-Arab states to destroy Israel...."

Decline and rise of the Arab Moslems. For the first six centuries after the Moslems spilled forth from Arabia, they conquered much of the world, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. The Arab Moslems did in their ascendancy give rise to a substantial civilization. But, beginning with their expulsion from Spain, a long decline set in that lasted until the early 20th century. That decline was the more bitter, because it was inflicted by the despised "infidels." It was something that had to be remedied by whatever means. Injured pride had to be salved; the enemies who caused this humiliation and this injury had to be destroyed.

The 20th century brought national independence to the Arab states. Two other fundamental events occurred: 1) The discovery of the world's largest oil deposits under the Arabian peninsula, and 2) The creation, in 1948, of the state of Israel, which ever since its birth has been the concentrated focus of the hatred and venom of all Moslem Arabs, a hatred that unites them, that even surpasses their hatreds against each other, and that has launched them into five disastrous wars against Israel. Even the rape of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein's Iraq was explained as being a step towards the "liberation of Palestine," a claim so bizarre, so patently absurd, that it can only be comprehended and given credence by a mind obsessed with the ideology of Arab Islam.

Moslem Arabs obsessed with Israel. The obsession of the Moslem Arabs with Israel is totally irrational. To have Israel as an independent country in the middle of the Arab-Moslem world is utterly intolerable to them. That is the reason that the 21 Arab states, among them the richest countries in the world, with a combined population of more than 200 million and with a land area greater than that of the U.S., have concentrated obsessive ferocity by military, economic, ideological, political, diplomatic, and any other means to destroy the tiny Jewish community of Palestine, and its successor, the Jewish state of Israel—only 5 million people, in a country just one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California.

Acts of terror in the United States, Argentina, England, and Israel have sobered many who had believed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be the cause for the unrest in the Middle East. The fact is that war is endemic in the Arab world and that the Moslem Arabs have been waging war against each other and against their non-Arab neighbors for centuries. But, as much as the Moslem Arabs hate each other, most of them are united in their greater hatred against the "infidel Jews" and their tiny country, and they have built vast war machines for the ultimate "jihad" to nuke the Jews, to poison them by chemicals or biologicals, or to chase them into the sea. The focus on the Palestinian plight is designed to divert attention from the many domestic problems and inter-Arab conflicts, and to direct the Moslem-Arab frustration against Israel, the "infidel Western outsider." The suggestion that Israel divest itself from its historic heartland, the 2,362 sq. mi. "West Bank," and from the Golan would lead to strategic suicide. The real cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Middle East is the unremitting desire of still most of the Arab-Moslem states to destroy Israel, their inability to come to terms with its very existence. That hatred and that intolerance are fueled by Arab-Moslem fanaticism and intransigence and unwillingness to accept diversity in the region. Only when that will be overcome can peace and tranquility finally come to the Middle East.

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brought almost to a vanishing-point."

In Spengler's view, such developments had reached their most extreme form in the United States. Both Bolshevism and Americanism, he insisted, are "organized exclusively from the economic side." He argued in *Man and Technology* that the two regimes are twin variants of modern mass tyranny, and thus not essentially different: "There is the same dictatorship of public opinion in America as in Russia (it does not matter that it is imposed by society instead of a party) that affects everything that is left in the West to the free option of individuals: flirtation and church-going, shoes and make-up, fashion in dance and novels, thinking, eating, and recreation."

V.

The thinker whose sweeping condemnation of America would have the greatest consequences for modern thought was Martin Heidegger. And it was Heidegger's impassioned denunciation of "Americanism" that would set the tone for most postmodern criticisms of America, to the point where it becomes meaningful to characterize postmodernism as "left Heideggerianism." As Ceaser explains,

> No thinker in this century has had greater influence on the development of the idea of America than Martin Heidegger. Although he borrowed much from his predecessors in Germany, particularly Spengler and Jünger, Heidegger went well beyond any of them in fashioning a symbol that has ever since connected the themes of desolation, horror, and homelessness to America. With Heidegger, America was transformed from a country to a major literary and philosophic category that intellectuals have since been unable to ignore.

For Heidegger, as for Spengler, there were no essential differences between Americanism and Bolshevism. "From a metaphysical point of view," he wrote, "Russia and America are the same, with the same dreary technological frenzy and the same unrestricted organization of the average man." He was convinced that, insofar as the world was becoming more and more Americanized, life was becoming increasingly mechanical, routinized, and insubstantial. As he observed in 1935, in a celebrated passage from *An Introduction to Metaphysics*:

> The lives of men began to slide into a world which lacked the depth from out of which the essential always comes.... The prevailing dimension became that of extension and number. Intelligence no longer meant a wealth of talent, lavishly spent ... but only what could be learned by everyone, the practice of a routine, always associated with a certain amount of sweat.... In America and in Russia this development grew into a boundless etcetera of indifference and always-the-sameness—so much so that the quantity took on a quality of its own.... This is the onslaught of what we call the demonic (in the sense of destructive evil).

Elsewhere Heidegger simply insisted that America was "the site of catastrophe." In his view, Germany alone, the embattled "nation in the middle," offered the world hope for salvation. The Germany from which Heidegger expected the salvation of the world, of course, was Hitler's Germany. In 1943, as the battle of Stalingrad raged, Heidegger could still proclaim that "the planet is in flames. The essence of man is out of joint. Only from the Germans can there come a world-historical reflection—if, that is, they find and preserve Germanness." That the planetary devastation that he described was a direct result of "Germanness" was a thought that, remarkably, never seems to have crossed his mind. Needless to say, the "real America" was unknown to Heidegger. He rarely left his *Heimat*.

VI.

Reconstructing America concludes with an examination of America as a figure of the postmodern imagination. Ceaser's star witness is the French postmodernist sage Jean Baudrillard, the theorist of the "simulacrum," according to whom the postmodern era is characterized by a proliferation of copies or images—"simulacra"—without corresponding originals. A few years back, Baudrillard wrote a short book with the ingenious title *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, in which he claimed that the real war paled in significance before the media-driven simulation of war: "So this military 'orgy' wasn't an orgy at all. It was an orgy of simulation, the simulation of an orgy." The "real war" was the battle for world opinion, whose "generals" were media consultants, spin doctors, and talking heads.

Once one understands Baudrillard's grand idea that media-generated appearances become more important than reality—that they have replaced reality—one can fairly well anticipate his analysis of any number of subjects. This is certainly true for his short book on America, which has also been one of his most successful. As a postmodernist, much of Baudrillard's theorizing is ironic; but when one scrapes away the veneer of playfulness, one finds a recycled, Francophone version of the idea of America as degeneration incarnate. Indeed, one finds more or less the same image proffered by the German conservative revolutionaries, now outfitted with a nonessentialist vocabulary. As Ceaser observes, "Baudrillard cribs almost every element of Heidegger's negative symbolic or metaphysical America."

Predictably, America represents for Baudrillard a negative utopia, the apogee of postmodern cultural suicide. The Americans, he observes, have achieved "an anti-utopia: that of unreason, of de-territorialization, of indeterminacy of subject and language, of neutralization of all values, and"—last but not least—"of the death of culture." America "exorcises the question of origins, she does not cultivate the origins or mythical authenticity, she has neither a past nor a founding truth." At times Baudrillard almost seems envious of American superficiality and glibness. Americans exemplify a lack of self-consciousness and depth to which Europeans could never aspire. As Ceaser wryly notes, "The fact that Baudrillard calls Americans fat, dumb, and uncultured is surely no reason to think that he is anti-American."

For Baudrillard, America is the apotheosis of postmodernism. In America, life no longer imitates art; instead, life and art (in the form of cinema) have essentially exchanged places. Life itself now appears as an inferior incarnation of cinematic "hyperreality." As Baudrillard remarks, "in America the cinema is true because ... the whole mode of life is cinemagraphic—life is cinema." The same confusion of illusion and reality is true of America's gargantuan theme parks. "Disneyland is presented

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as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation." Here, the relationship between image and reality has thrillingly reversed itself.

Unlike Nietzsche and Heidegger, Baudrillard did travel to the land that he was describing. Yet one of the strange features of his narrative is that, although he describes a myriad of tourist sites, he reproduces not a single conversation with a "real" American. (It might have disrupted his theoretical perspective.) Baudrillard's slick and platitudinous view of American society has become standard issue among academic postmodernists. Like his precursors on the European Right, Baudrillard believes that human actors are powerless to implement meaningful social change. The die has been cast. "Hyperreality," that is to say, America, confronts us as a fate. It has become inexorable. The "longing to perish" of Germany's conservative revolutionaries lives again.

The only serious objection to be made to Ceaser's account of the European Right's hostility to America is that the situation was even worse than he thinks. Anti-Americanism was often an article of faith for the European Left, too. The same indictments of America as technological Moloch that one finds in Spengler and Heidegger were common currency among their adversaries; the criticism of "technology" was merely replaced by the criticism of capitalism. The Left perceived America as the pinnacle of capitalist exploitation, unrestrained by the mollifying influences of old-world traditions and politesse.

For Gramsci, America was simply the country in which "Fordism," or assembly-line mass production, had gained total ascendancy; that is, it signified the consummate triumph of the capitalist rationalization of labor. For Adorno, America was the land in which "chewing gum"—as a figure for hedonistic mass consumption—had assumed metaphysical significance. Sartre, most famously, renounced the more sanguine view of things American that he had developed during the 1930s. America had become, in his words, the land in which "the most odious form of capitalism had triumphed." (For Simone de Beauvoir, Americans were "a people of sheep.")

To criticize the failings of American society, of course, is right and necessary. But the wholesale demonization of America is an entirely different matter. The European Left was never much interested in America's contributions to the history of political democracy—a constitutional commitment to popular sovereignty, a Bill of Rights, periodic creative upsurges of democratic populism. America was the land of bourgeois class hegemony, full stop. Nowhere else—certainly nowhere in Europe—were the political and economic successes of the rising middle classes so dramatic and far-reaching. And according to the left-wing catechism, the political achievements of the bourgeoisie were axiomatically to be deplored.

Is it really surprising that the extreme left and the extreme right would agree with respect to their perceptions of America? Despite their political differences, both poles of the ideological spectrum share an uncompromising rejection of political liberalism. For both varieties of political extremism, the liberal ideal of an independent civil society legally secured against arbitrary governmental encroachments is philosophically and politically insupportable, insofar as it presents an insuperable obstacle to the supremacy of the salvific state. In their attitudes toward Americanism, too, communism and fascism touched.

When communism collapsed in 1989, Central European politicians and intellectuals scrambled to obtain copies of the Constitution of the United States. They viewed the American founding as the indispensable precedent on the road to political freedom. As Vaclav Havel remarked shortly following the Velvet Revolution: "The Japanese do computer chips; the Americans do constitutions." In that same year, France celebrated the bicentennial of its Revolution, but the only achievement deemed worthy of commemoration was the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen of August 20, 1789. After a fitful two-hundred-year struggle to determine the Revolution's meaning, in other words, French officials decided to highlight the achievement of the Revolution that approximated the ideals of political liberalism—that is, the aspect that displayed the greatest affinities with the principles of the American Revolution.

One wishes that Ceaser had provided an unambiguous rejoinder to the reactionary postmodern disavowals of the Enlightenment and reason. When, two centuries ago, the *philosophes* undertook an all-out assault against theological dogmatism and unwarranted political privilege, they laid the foundations for our modern conceptions of public reason and political fairness. In more ways than we can enumerate, we are their heirs and their beneficiaries. Does this make us, and our liberties, "logocentric"? If Derrida says so. But I wonder what Derrida and the army of Derrideans make of the uncomfortable (but unsurprising) fact that "logocentrism" was the coinage, in 1931, of a German reactionary and anti-Semite named Ludwig Klages, in his work *The Intellect as Antagonist of the Soul.* Here, too, the affinities between postmodernism and the German ideology are manifest and telling.

In the postmodernist demonology, it is the Enlightenment that bears direct historical responsibility for the Gulag and Auschwitz. In the eyes of these convinced misologists, or enemies of reason, modern totalitarianism is merely the upshot of the universalizing impetus of Enlightenment reason. Or, as Foucault once observed, "reason is torture." According to the "politics of difference," moreover, reason is little more than the ideological window-dressing for Eurocentrism and its horrors.

These wild claims are historically inaccurate. They are also self-defeating: if we abandon rational argument, we have little left to rely on but the "right of the strongest" or "identity politics." (National Socialism was a monumentally monstrous instance of "identity politics.") And they are also self-contradictory. For the enemies of reason can only advance their position through force of the better argument; that is, by giving reasons that aim to convince others. To criticize reason's failings is one thing. To reject it in its entirety is not antirationalism but anti-intellectualism, or mental suicide.

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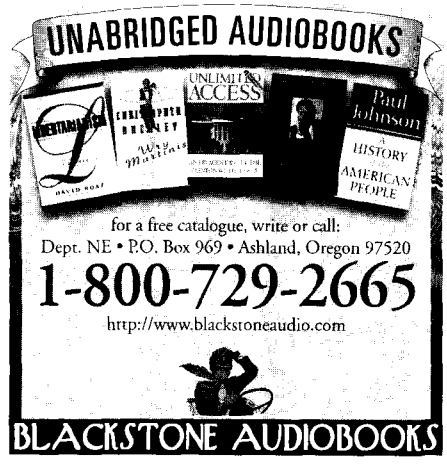

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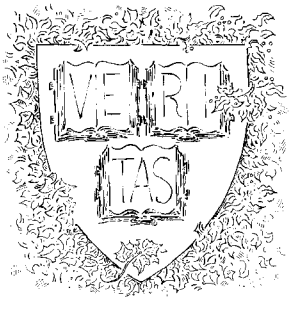
BOSTON DIARIST

Outside the glare

UNEXPECTED FAMILY OBLIGATIONS kept me from attending the Twelfth International AIDS Conference held in Geneva last month. Thus I was limited to following the daily dispatches in the American press—and pondering the sharp contrast between the media's coverage of this gathering and their treatment of the meeting two years ago in Vancouver. That conference marked the first time that large-scale results on combining the newer protease inhibitors with older drugs like AZT and 3TC were aired. This multipronged attack yielded a significant suppression of the virus and an increase in T-cell numbers in the majority of patients. Even some with very advanced AIDS appeared to be rescued by the combination treatment, with marked gain of weight, energy, and force. The palpable euphoria among the participants at the Vancouver meeting reflected not the specifics of the particular drugs in the cocktail but the fact that a new paradigm had been established: HIV could be effectively inhibited in the host, and immune function significantly restored.

OF COURSE, SEASONED RESEARCHers and clinicians knew that the virus is a wily opponent and, like every microbe, struggles to free itself from the grip of drug treatment. Moreover, no medicine is without side effects and limitations. Though the first clinical remission of AIDS had indeed been achieved with combination therapy, how long it would last, and at what price, were yet to be known. But such clinical realism mutes the impact of a sharp sound bite, and the caveats voiced in Vancouver were largely swept aside in the media's reports. Instead, in their quest for maximum impact, the media went beyond sober scientific data into the realm of heady speculation—presenting highly theoretical models of virus decay and immune restoration that projected that the infection might completely burn itself out such that no further treatment would be needed after some 18 to 24 months. This tenuous hypothesis provided fodder for the kind of headline that journalists thirst for: "AIDS CURED?" A Harvard colleague, dismayed at this runaway reporting, acidly commented, "Hold the press conference when it's done, not when someone dreams about it."

NO SUCH PRESS CONFERENCE HAS been held in the ensuing two years, but the possibility of controlling HIV has been lent support by some compelling developments. The death rate from AIDS fell about 40 percent in the first half of last year in the United States, and the incidence of hallmark opportunistic infections like Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, as well as cancers like Kaposi's sarcoma, declined markedly as well. In more than half of the patients, the combination therapy continued to suppress the virus and sustain immune defenses after two years. Anecdotally, of more than 100 patients with HIV whom I care for, I have buried only one in the past nine months. Ten years ago I would have buried at least a score. The major AIDS hospice in Boston's Mission Hill closed last year because of meager occupancy.



SUCH OBSERVATIONS were regularly reported in the media, along with reports about the burdens and side effects of the cocktail. Keeping up with a regimen of a dozen or more pills, taken daily and at specific intervals related to food intake, taxes even the most determined personality. Worse, in some patients, the therapy has been found to result in elevated blood lipids and glucose, leading to disturbing distribution of fat to the abdomen and neck and development of diabetes. And, in contradiction to the hypothesis that a patient could be cured within two years of treatment, this past November, several research groups published data on the persistence of HIV in T-cells that ordinarily survive a decade or more, despite combination therapy.

THESE ALREADY REPORTED FINDings were updated in Geneva and largely recycled by the media as new and disturbing. A similar scenario was played out on the vaccine front. Over the past few months, researchers had been debating the viability of a vaccine made from inert HIV rather than a live strain. Despite serious reservations about its potential, the vaccine entered clinical trials. A week before the Geneva conference, the pessimists' predictions were reinforced by new research indicating that HIV has hidden arms that only spring out upon contact with the surface of a vulnerable T-cell and that these limbs would not be handcuffed by the inert vaccine. Although researchers had expressed doubts all along, once again the media presented this finding as an unforeseen blow to the progress toward a vaccine.

WHY DID THE MEDIA TAKE THIS approach? Largely because the Geneva Conference posed a problem: the findings presented there, whether positive or negative, merely added to existing knowledge about AIDS. And the data on new treatments was still too inconclusive to declare any winners or losers. In short, not enough news was being made. So "non-news" and "old news" had to be transmuted into "new news." And, driven by the imperative of creating the best sound bite, the media set up a simplistic point-counterpoint framework—using their own overhyped previous reporting as their reference. No cure had been produced in two years. This became the "story."

IN A CERTAIN SENSE, the media provided both a service and a disservice. On one hand, they helped dispel the illusion that the epidemic is over. The urgency of creating new and better therapies for infected people was made all the more apparent. And the desperate need for a vaccine was reemphasized. But the media's disservice was evident in the faces of the patients and their loved ones who visited my clinic since the conference. Their hope had begun to wane. And, to my mind, inappropriately so. Nothing presented at Geneva contradicted the paradigm that HIV *could* be controlled. And several of the logistical and clinical difficulties with the initial cocktails are likely to be addressed soon. There are four antiviral drugs pending FDA approval this year, and other experimental agents are in development. These promise to simplify the taxing three-times-a-day schedule of pills and to offer options to those with emerging resistant viral strains. A number of approaches to boost immune defenses in parallel with attacking the virus are already under way. The outcome of these new treatments cannot yet be determined, and it would be naïve to think that everything, or nothing, will ultimately succeed. But there is real hope for people with AIDS. It is to be found outside the glare of the camera lights, far from the microphones, in the creative quiet of the laboratory and the intimate corner of the clinic.

JEROME GROOPMAN

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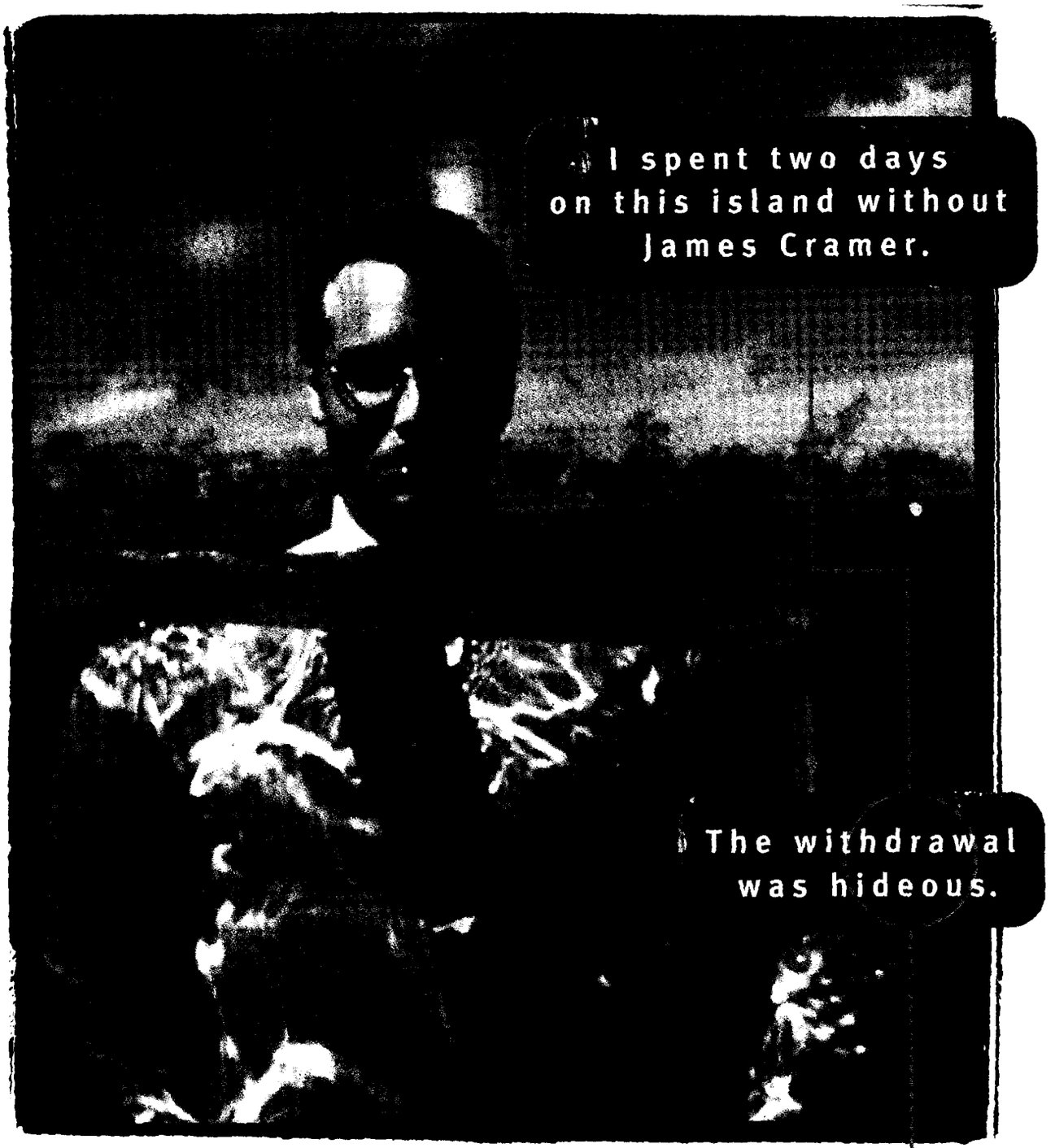

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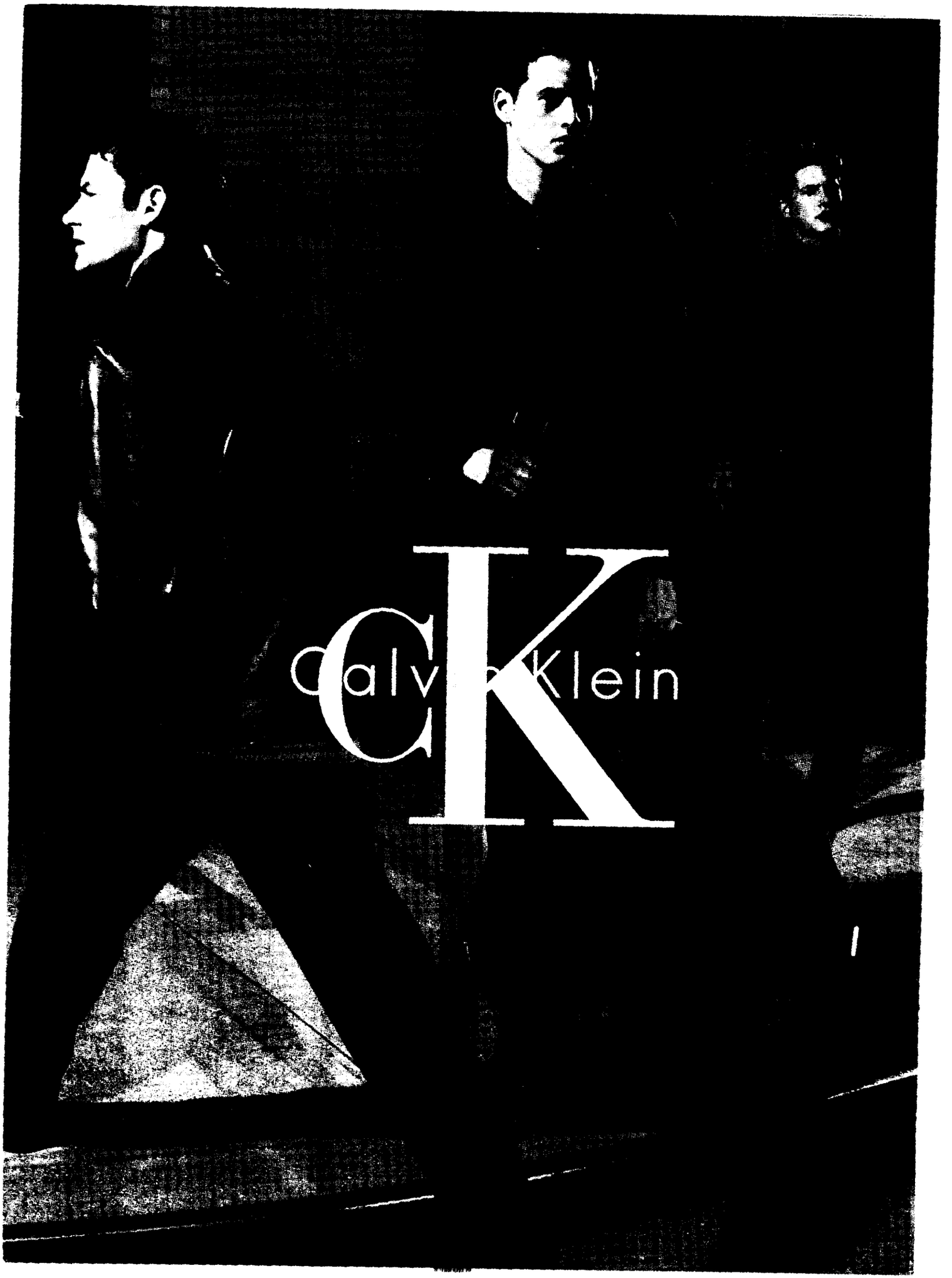

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